DEATH OF THE DIRECTOR

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“A true cinematic genius must sometimes step outside for a smoke and let others do their job.”

Chapter 1: Who’s to Blame

Massive airliners packed with hundreds of passengers, sleek private jets, cargo planes heavy with tons of fuel — they are all approaching the same airfield in Los Angeles. All cleared for landing. There’s just one problem: the airport has only one air traffic controller on duty.

He sits in the tower surrounded by humming monitors, blinking lights, and radios crackling nonstop. He’s sweating, shoulders hunched, eyes bloodshot from exhaustion. While he guides one aircraft down, hundreds of others pull at him from every direction — requesting headings, reporting low fuel, demanding immediate clearance. The radio nearly chokes on the noise. Above him, the sky becomes a carousel of planes circling endlessly, like moths trapped under a porch light. The queue tightens, the holding patterns stack up. Everything depends on one man in a headset who physically cannot manage it all.

Now forget the airplanes. Remove the runway, the sky, the boarding stairs. Replace them with sets, actors, and a film crew.

The logic remains the same: hundreds of people are ready to move, but until “the guy with the headset” — now called the director — makes a decision, everything hangs suspended. You don’t need a management degree to grasp the obvious: when the entire process bottlenecks at one person, that person stops being a control center and becomes a choke point slowing everyone else down. In an emergency, that leads to disaster. In a creative process, it leads to lost ideas, missed opportunities, sometimes even total failure.

While the director signs off on one department, the others stall. The cinematographer waits for approval of the frame. The composer waits for the chosen theme. The production designer waits for confirmation of the curtain color. The editor waits to hear which take survives. Everything freezes midair, suspended in anticipation of a single man with a megaphone.

And if anyone feels tempted to challenge that last claim, they likely haven’t witnessed the painfully awkward spectacle of a director with no acting experience stepping into an actor’s technique — dictating intonation, demonstrating gestures, “setting” physicality.

That is not collaboration. It is ego overriding common sense.

It looks just as absurd as an architect who has never held a trowel trying to teach a mason how to lay brick, or a restaurant manager who has watched too many cooking shows marching into the kitchen to instruct the chef how to slice onions, which spices to use in the broth, how many seconds to sear a steak, and which direction to flip it.

Let’s turn to real examples. Jean-Luc Godard — with full respect for his revolutions in cinema — never acted in a single role. Did that stop him from “programming” his performers, dictating gestures, facial expressions, movement, intonation? Not at all. And we don’t

condemn him for it, because the urge to substitute yourself for the entire process — to saturate every detail with your own vision, even where others possess far sharper expertise — is the most recognizable symptom of directorial ego.

Yes, monarchy suffocates creativity. Don't pretend this is news.

But who is to blame?

Both directors and audiences, equally.

The fault of directors is their vanity. Massive, overfed vanity — prick it with a pin and out pours an endless stream of unwritten memoirs about their genius, late-night Oscar fantasies, imaginary ascents to the top of IMDb, rehearsals in their heads of walking onto the Cannes stage in a white suit, delivering a speech to a reverent, silent crowd.

The fault of audiences is simpler: they want a face attached to a project. They crave the "last samurai," the "lone genius," the "founding father," the "mad visionary." Most people will barely register the news that a vaccine was developed by a joint research team at Cambridge and Pfizer. They want the story of a slightly unhinged, wild-haired genius scientist who single-handedly saves the world in a basement lab. That image is easier to sell and more satisfying to buy. That is why orchestra conductors, film directors, and even the British monarch continue to exist — as institutional relics whose very presence restrains the potential of entire systems.

I am the author of this book and a director with many years of experience, and more than once I have caught myself realizing that a large number of decisions in my projects were inefficient for one simple reason: no matter how much you puff up your cheeks, you cannot balance screenplay, rhythm, visual style, dramaturgy, actors' objectives, technical constraints, and marketing expectations on a single tray. Something will tilt. Something will spill.

Second month of post-production. Dark circles under my eyes, chronic exhaustion, fifteen kilograms lost. The colorist asks, "Which grade are we locking?" (Color grading is the final color correction — once it's done, it's done.) I squint at the screen, hesitate, deliberate for days, and finally make the call. A couple of months later, when my head clears, I realize that out of the seven options presented, I chose the worst one. But people liked it. They liked it because they never saw the other six.

"Great color grade, Illia."
"Really? Thanks."

"I loved the palette you chose. It's very cool."
"Yes, yes, we spent a long time searching for the right solution."

Now I understand why so many directors claim they never rewatch their own films. Not out of embarrassment. It's because we see them differently than the audience does. We know the backstory. We know where the failed, misguided, foolish — sometimes laughably naive — decisions are buried. That's why revisiting your own work can feel like torture. Strap me down, pry my eyelids open like Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*, and force me to watch. I

deserve it. I am the selfish parent who single-handedly disfigured his own child, insisting on treating, teaching, feeding, dressing, training, and raising it alone simply because he believed he knew better than everyone else.

Speaking of *A Clockwork Orange*. Stanley Kubrick's brilliant adaptation of a brilliant novel also serves as a useful example of how a director's ego can grow an enormous, unsightly pimple on an otherwise near-flawless film.

Think of the fight between Alex and Billyboy's gang in the abandoned theater. The tension peaks, the characters charge at one another with bats — and suddenly it turns into something resembling a strange ballet: somersaults, punches thrown into empty air, pirouettes, acrobatic leaps across the room. The attempt to stage a fight as choreography without genuine expertise in that field looks, at best, awkward. The concept itself was strong — turning violence into dance, into spectacle. But the absence not of talent, but of professional fight staging and movement technique transformed the scene from a refined stylistic choice into an uncomfortable clumsiness.

A similar issue appears in his earlier film *The Killing* (1956). The bar fight feels overly calculated and artificial. Every movement seems pre-programmed: two steps sideways, a punch, a pause, a fall. Instead of a living collision, we get a mechanical sequence, more like wind-up toys in a music box than human beings in conflict. The few reviews I found that mention it reduce the scene to a single word: clumsy.

The problem here is not so much Kubrick himself as the limits of his method. His extreme control over form and framing clashes with the chaos and unpredictability of a fight. As a result, his brawls resemble carefully arranged mise-en-scène rather than eruptions of violence. Spontaneity and force are replaced by geometry and repetition.

It is reasonable to assume that the involvement of a fight coordinator or choreographer might have strengthened those scenes and made the films better. But this is where cultural resistance kicks in: better an imperfect "authentic" Kubrick than a Kubrick who allowed outside interference. Cinematic tradition has conditioned us to view a film as the product of a singular author, even when that singularity produces miscalculations that a more collaborative model could have corrected.

Undoubtedly, especially among film school graduates hypnotized by the name "Kubrick the genius," there will be those who say:

"You don't understand anything. That's the point. It's irony. It's satire. It's grotesque. It's… it's… It's brilliant."

And what would I have done in Master Kubrick's place? Invite a seasoned fight coordinator with decades of experience and dozens of staged brawls behind him? Of course not. I would have done exactly what Kubrick did — and very likely met the same fiasco.

Why?

Because a director does not want another director's name stepping anywhere near his own in the credits. That's why we put our surname in enormous bold letters at the beginning of

the film — sometimes twice, in case you missed it — and again at the end. If we could wedge it into the middle, we would. Sometimes the ego we so carefully disguise itches so badly that, despite being mediocre actors, we insert ourselves into our own films just to play a short but “memorable” cameo.

Alfred Hitchcock appeared in nearly all of his films. Quentin Tarantino occasionally gave himself entire scenes. But the championship belt of self-regard probably goes to Nikita Mikhalkov in *Burnt by the Sun* (1994), where he played the lead and remained on screen for roughly 85 percent of the runtime. A fair question follows: who, exactly, was behind the camera directing at that point?

It’s worth remembering that when *Burnt by the Sun* was shot, there were no digital monitors. Film stock could only be reviewed later, in the studio. Which means Mikhalkov had no immediate way of seeing what the scene looked like from the outside while he himself was in front of the lens almost the entire time.

And yes, he won an Oscar for that film. The press drowned him in praise for his directing. *The New York Times* wrote that he “masterfully shapes the rhythm and atmosphere of the film, blending the intimacy of family drama with the scale of historical tragedy.” The *Los Angeles Times* called it “a model of subtle direction, where each frame carries emotional weight and scenes are constructed with near-theatrical precision.” *New York Magazine* noted that Mikhalkov “possesses a rare gift — making everyday details pulse with dramatic tension.” *Entertainment Weekly* added that the film “builds to its quiet horror through meticulous control of tone — from sunlit lightness to inescapable menace.”

In short, *Burnt by the Sun* stands as a vivid example of a ship reaching port without a visible captain — yet the press wrote as though he had rowed it there alone.

So how did a good film get made “without” a director?

The answer is simple: cinema is not one person. The camera does not stop rolling, the lights do not shut off, actors do not freeze in suspended poses simply because the “man with the megaphone” isn’t at the console. But industry and audience alike find it more convenient to preserve the illusion: film equals actors and director. The fact that the lion’s share of the “miracles” is created by an anonymous crowd is simply too dull. A miracle, after all, must have a single god.

Chapter 2: The History of the Myth

The history of cinema has largely been built on the cult of the director-as-author. The names Chaplin, Spielberg, Fellini became synonymous with total control over a film. In the public imagination, cinema is born in a single head while the crew merely “services the vision.” It was a convenient mythology — for the press, for producers, for audiences. But reality was always more complicated: even the most “auteur-driven” films depended on dozens of people making crucial decisions.

Today the hierarchy of film production feels like an unshakable commandment. Any modern graduate will be ready to defend the theory of cinematic monarchy with religious fervor. But in truth, this supposedly sacred structure was never static. Film production is a living system, shaped by technology, industry pressure, and artistic logic. The “golden order” people worship mostly existed in the imagination of critics and viewers.

During the silent era and early Hollywood, the director was closer to a craftsman than an author. Studio producers approved scripts, controlled final cuts, and dictated budgets. Visual style often came from cinematographers trained within unified studio systems. In the so-called Golden Age of the studio system in the 1930s and 1940s, real power lay with studio heads. The director functioned as a production general within an industrial machine.

Only in the 1950s and 1960s did the pendulum swing sharply. The European wave — the French Nouvelle Vague, Italian neorealism, Polish and Czech poetic cinema — elevated the director into a singular author. Festivals reinforced the equation: film equals director’s name. Thus the myth of the visionary director was born — Kubrick, Bergman, Fellini, Godard — each presented as a demiurge commanding light, sound, and montage. It gave cinema artistic weight, but also cemented the illusion that the director alone pulls every string.

In the 1970s, Hollywood produced a new generation of “auteur” directors — Coppola, Scorsese, Spielberg, Lucas — yet even they operated in constant negotiation with producers balancing ambition against market reality. In the 1980s, franchises dominated; Lucas and Spielberg became brands, supported by armies of screenwriters, second-unit directors, and production teams.

From the 1990s onward, cinema became a global industry of co-productions, festival strategies, and pre-calculated market trajectories. In practice, the director had long ceased to be the sole center. Investors, festival programmers, marketers, and target audiences all shaped decisions. Yet paradoxically, the myth of the singular author only grew stronger. A film was easier to sell as “the new Spielberg,” “the new von Trier,” or “the new Nolan” than as the result of dozens of equal specialists.

Between 2000 and 2020, the number of hands, eyes, and brains involved in a single film multiplied: fight coordinators, previs supervisors, VFX leads, animation directors, second-unit teams, stunt designers, digital compositors. Each one solves problems without which the film would collapse. And yet, despite this polyphony, the structure remains stubbornly medieval: one name stands at the center. One king. One demiurge.

The more collective the process becomes, the more fiercely the illusion of singular authorship is protected. Cinema's history begins to look less like the liberation of the artist and more like the history of mythmaking — where collective labor hides behind a luminous name.

This distortion has gone so far that directors are often credited even for story and screenplay, as though they emerged solely from their heads. Audiences see one name on the poster and forget that in most films writing and directing are separate crafts performed by different people. Everyone knows *Jaws* as a Spielberg film, but far fewer can name Peter Benchley and Carl Gottlieb, who wrote the screenplay. *Blade Runner* is remembered as Ridley Scott's masterpiece, yet Hampton Fancher and David Peoples shaped the adaptation and devised key scenes. *Star Wars* is tied to George Lucas as the father of the universe, but only a minority recall Lawrence Kasdan, who wrote *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*.

So can we simply remove the director?

Tempting. But no. It isn't that simple.

Chapter 3: What To Do

Without a director, a film will not cohere into a unified whole. The director historically became the connective tissue between departments, a kind of queen ant upon whom the colony's coordination depends. Cinema evolved in such a way that the director became not merely a coordinator but an almost ritual figure — like a conductor or a team captain. This tradition emerged when film crews resembled small theatrical troupes and the director literally carried the entire vision in his head.

Over time, the process grew exponentially more complex: beyond camera and actors came lighting systems, sound design, elaborate sets, editing suites, CGI, VFX, stunt coordination, costume departments, makeup teams, production design, pyrotechnics, digital compositing, and dozens of other disciplines, each requiring its own professional.

Yet while complexity expanded, the management model barely changed. Hundreds of new professions grew around the director like branches around a trunk — but the trunk remained the same. One person still serves as the funnel through which all decisions must pass. Lighting setup? Ask the director. Dress color? The director. Explosion timing, stunt trajectory, musical pause length — through the same ears, out of the same mouth.

It is the aviation tower all over again.

In an airport, mistakes are visible immediately: the plane lands on the wrong runway, baggage goes to the wrong country. There are objective metrics. In cinema, evaluation is subjective. No one can prove whether *Schindler's List* could have been deeper, whether *Waterworld* could have avoided sinking, whether *Finding Nemo* could have been more moving, or whether *Blade Runner 2049* could have been more hypnotic.

The honest answer is always yes.

But you will never know how much. Because to know, you would need to see the other versions — the unseen cuts where Roger Deakins persuaded a different camera angle, where an actor followed Tarantino's alternative suggestion, where a composer stepped aside for Jim Jarmusch's colder minimalism, where the editor worked under George Miller's manic rhythmic supervision.

Those versions never existed. They dissolved inside one overloaded brain that simultaneously decided how the light should fall, where the actor should turn, what key the score should inhabit, and when the screen should fade to black.

That brain was subjective, limited, and shaped by habit. And yet it determined everything.

Meanwhile, in other fields evolution moved differently. Science abandoned the lone Einstein model in favor of international consortia. Corporations rely on boards. Governments replaced monarchs with parliaments. In television writers' rooms, responsibilities are divided — dialogue specialists, narrative architects, lore designers. In game development, leadership is distributed among producers and creative leads.

But directing still clings to the irrational fantasy of the one-man orchestra.

Open the door to almost any other industry and you will see decentralization. Large-scale projects cannot depend entirely on the competence, mood, or even health of a single individual.

Game development offers a clear example. *No Man's Sky* began as an ambitious but technically limited project within a small studio. There was no absolute king — different leads handled programming, design, art, and narrative systems. Through ongoing collaboration and cross-influence, the project evolved into one of the most supported and expansive games in its genre, earning recognition for unprecedented post-release growth.

Literature offers similar models. The Italian collective Wu Ming writes historical novels collaboratively, revising one another, shaping a unified voice without elevating a single genius. Their novel *Q* became an international bestseller — not because of one great author, but because of a community functioning as a cognitive symbiosis.

Architecture? Headquarters like Apple's campus, Olympic stadiums, opera houses — they are not the work of a solitary "Norman Foster" or "Santiago Calatrava," but of teams of architects, engineers, and urban planners.

Could a film have ten directors? One leading actors, another overseeing visual aesthetics, a third shaping editing rhythm, a fourth managing VFX integration, a fifth supervising physical staging. A model of distributed directing, where comprehensive decisions emerge not from one head but from synchronized collaboration.

The predictable objection is that such a film would lose its soul, its authorial voice. In reality, authorial style is not the product of isolation but of distinctive decisions. Twenty minds with different backgrounds can create depth no single genius can sustain. Personal experience always limits imagination. A collective brain — where lighting designers think differently than stunt coordinators, where sound designers argue with costume artists — generates unexpected intersections. Those intersections become style. Not a rigid stamp, but a living language born of dialogue.

They will not tear the project apart if management is structured intelligently. Later we will examine practical frameworks for balancing creative freedom with cohesion.

Imagine abandoning the myth of the singular director and thinking project-based. Cinema ceases to be a house owned by one master and becomes an architectural ensemble, where each facade is designed by a different architect but integrated consciously into a unified whole.

Second effect: resilience. One director can derail a project through illness, burnout, conflict, or simple incompetence in one of dozens of required domains. A distributed model absorbs shock. If one block fails, another carries the load.

Third effect: acceleration. In the traditional model, the director is a bottleneck. In a distributed structure, decisions happen in parallel. While the visual lead approves storyboards, the performance lead rehearses actors, and the editing supervisor tests rhythm on rough cuts. This shortens timelines and creates creative resonance — one idea triggering another in real time.

A film created by a team of specialized directors working simultaneously — not like *Four Rooms*, where each segment was isolated, but collaboratively on the same canvas — is an experiment long hovering in theory but rarely pursued in practice. Yet such an experiment would almost certainly generate public excitement, especially with a striking lineup. The poster itself would become an event.

That is why I am offering this idea in advance to every producer reading this book. Perhaps you will be the one to pioneer a new format and earn recognition for it… or crash spectacularly.

Failure here is painfully easy. A team of directors can dismantle a project for a hundred reasons:

– competing egos and the battle for the “final word”;
– different speeds of working and decision-making;
– incompatible visual and dramaturgical approaches;
– conflicting ideas about tone and ultimate purpose;
– simple exhaustion from endless meetings;
– and so on.

Which is precisely why this book does not end with a provocative prelude. We now move into practical structure — a framework refined through dozens of experiments, trials and errors, and post-mortems of both successful and catastrophic cases. Including concrete methods for handling fractures within team-based directing: what to do when one block performs flawlessly while another stalls; how to integrate artists with opposing creative instincts; how to prevent the process from devolving into collective, pointless discussion.

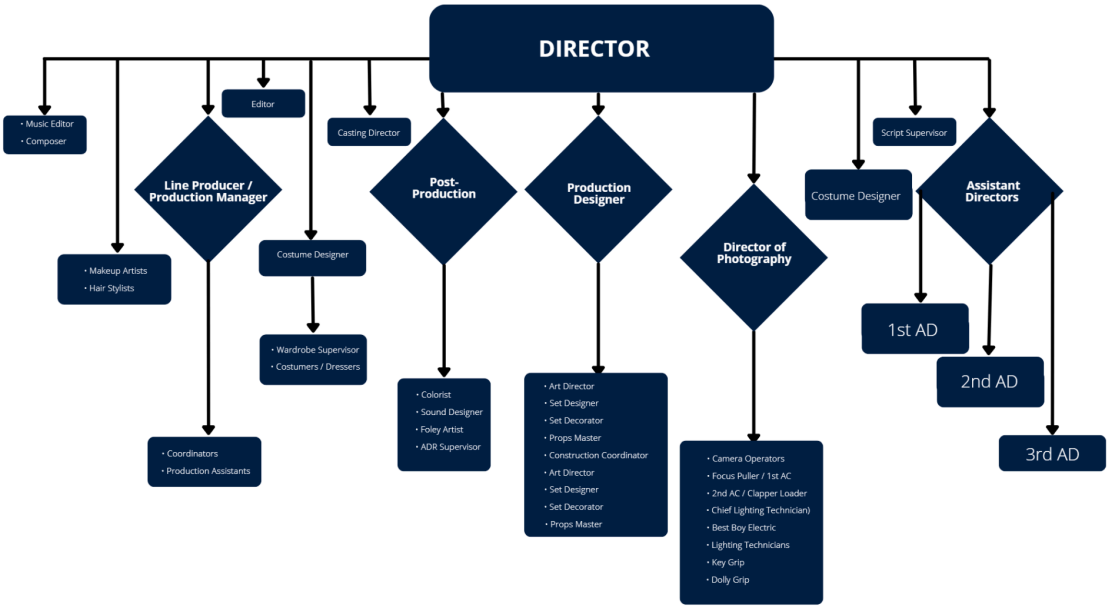
At the same time, we must acknowledge a real risk. In cinema, as in any creative field, it is dangerously easy to trigger “staff inflation” — multiplying titles while duplicating functions, creating a heavy, inefficient organism that consumes resources without producing clarity.

So the first task is defining which “tiered directors” are genuinely necessary on set — and which would only introduce noise.

The New Model

Before outlining the new structure, let us briefly recall what the old one looks like. More precisely, the “classical” model.

It looks like this:

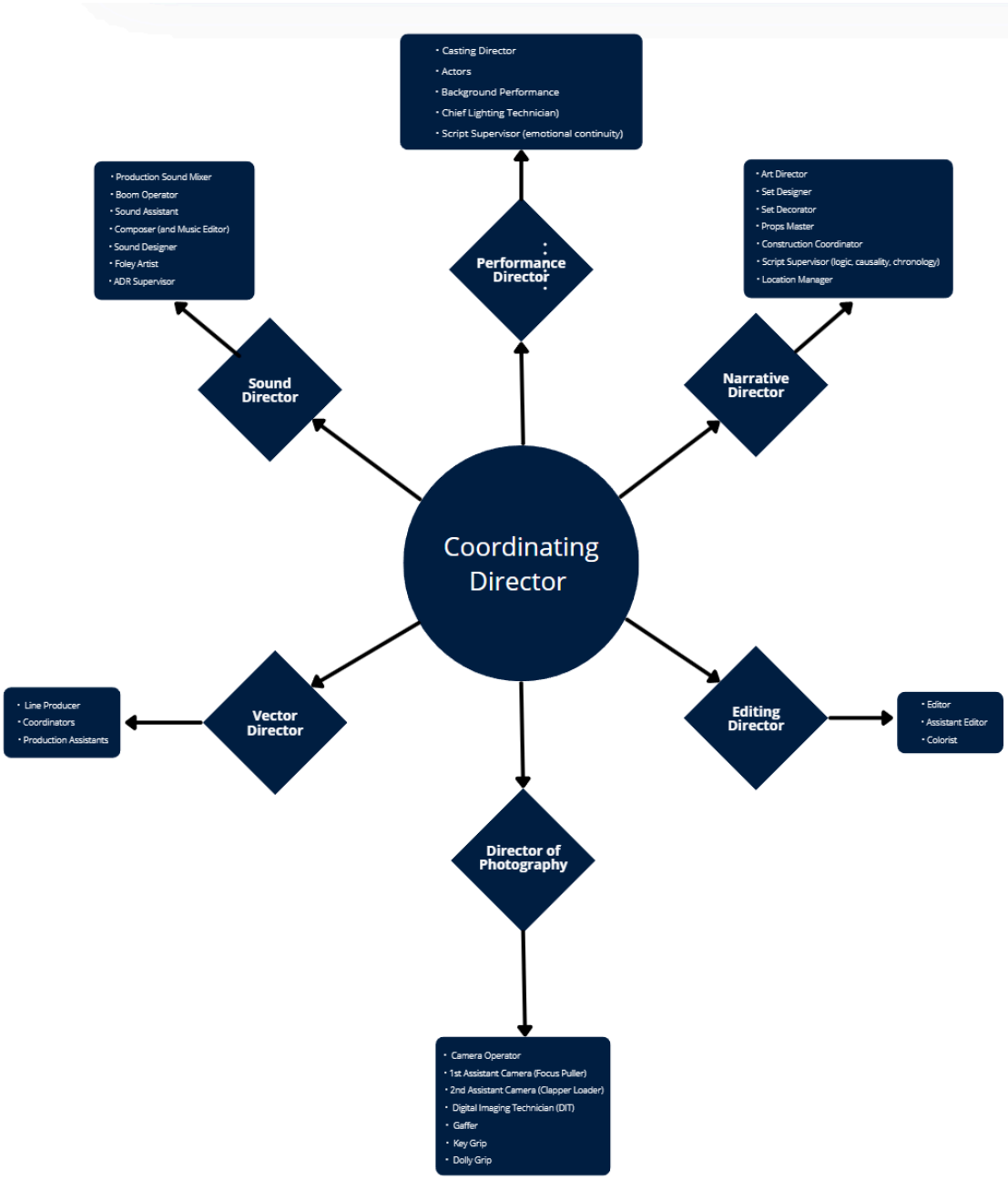


This is what the “pyramid” of creative organization in the film industry has looked like for a hundred years. On paper, it resembles an octopus more than a pyramid: at the center sits the director as the head, and from him extend dozens of tentacles — cinematography, production design, music, casting, sound, editing, costumes, makeup, stunts, VFX, locations, production management. All of them twitch at once, demanding attention, decisions, stimulation from the “central brain.”

The problem is that a real octopus is biologically equipped to control each tentacle independently. A director is not. In practice, he tries to grasp everything at once, without the time or the cognitive limbs required to do so.

This model survives largely out of cultural habit. It is familiar, ritualized, unquestioned. Which is precisely why it is not worth lingering on.

Let’s shift to a different metaphor — the “electron” model.



At the top there is no longer a “ruler with a megaphone.” Instead, there is a coordinator at the center of all departments. He is neither a boss nor the leader of the project, but rather an arbitration authority who steps in during disputes and ruptures between the orbits. His task is not to dictate decisions, but to keep the system in balance.

Around him revolve the director-orbits: performance, visual, narrative, sound, editing, vector. Each is responsible for its own layer of the film; each possesses autonomy

and its own internal logic. Together they form a stable field where value emerges not from centralized control, but from a constant exchange of impulses.

Unlike the pyramid, where the apex is overloaded with a thousand decisions and turns into a bottleneck, the “electron” model distributes the workload: the orbits operate in parallel, sometimes arguing, sometimes synchronizing, yet the system remains alive and resilient.

Incidentally, this is precisely how the human body functions. Consciousness does not control every breath, heartbeat, or intestinal contraction. We do not sit and think: “All right, liver, time to filter blood, and kidneys — remove toxins.” The organism is decentralized: each system has its own autonomy and regulatory mechanisms, while the central nervous system merely coordinates balance and intervenes in moments of crisis.

Try to imagine a body in which every organ’s action required conscious command: the heart would stop while we are engaged in conversation; the lungs would forget to inhale during concentration; the liver would freeze awaiting the next “approved.” That is the pyramid model — fragile, overloaded, inefficient.

In this chapter we have outlined the very idea of distributed directing and presented it as a system of orbits around a coordinator. But this is only the framework. The real work begins when we descend to the level of each individual orbit.

In the following chapters, we will examine in detail each “director” within this model.

Chapter 4 Performance Director

Any scene in a film largely rests on how a human being lives within the frame: listens, reacts, lies, fears, holds pauses. And this is precisely where the overwhelming majority of “universal” directors break down — not because they are foolish or untalented, but because they are torn between a dozen responsibilities. Camera, lighting, sets, schedule — all of it distracts from the most important thing: acting.

There is another problem: a director may simply not possess the habits, slang, and gestures of a specific environment. A film about the ghetto requires someone who understands the code of street life; a story about mafiosi requires someone who understands how criminal authorities look, breathe, and even simply sit; for white-collar environments, someone must know how to convey their cold smiles and restrained gestures. Without this, characters begin to look not like living people, but like actors “playing mafia,” “playing teenagers,” or “playing Wall Street clerks.”

This is precisely why the need arises for a separate role — the Performance Director. He is the head of an independent directing department whose area of responsibility is acting in its full scope: from casting and preparation to on-set work and control of emotional continuity.

He works on equal footing with other directors (visual director, narrative director, etc.) and reports only to the coordinating director. His tasks are to guarantee behavioral authenticity of the characters, a unified performance scale, preservation of the emotional trajectory, and integration of acting truth into the overall structure of the film.

The Performance Director fulfills three key functions:

Coordination — connects casting, coaches, actors, and the rehearsal process into a unified system, eliminating gaps between preparation and shooting.

Control — ensures that acting remains precise and internally consistent: no take deviates from the emotional logic of the role.

Integration — translates technical tasks of other departments (camera, sound, editing) into the language of acting, and vice versa.

The Performance Director heads an autonomous Performance Department. Under his supervision are all specialists responsible for the selection, preparation, and support of actors at all stages of production.

All of the specialists listed below have long existed in cinema. At present, however, they are scattered in different corners and attached to different reporting lines: some report to producers, some are assigned to assistants, some work directly with the director. As a result, their work resembles a dispersed mass without a common center of gravity. The Performance Department gathers this scattered mosaic under one roof — with clear leadership and a unified performance scale.

Let us now examine who exactly is included in this department and what tasks they perform:

Performance Director — heads the Performance Department; gives acting notes; ensures unified performance scale and emotional continuity.

Casting Director — selects actors based on behavioral criteria; conducts auditions; provides feedback.

• Casting Assistant — audition logistics; self-tapes; initial screening.

Extras Casting Director (when large-scale extras are involved) — selects types and background aligned with the behavioral code of the scene.

Coaches

• Dialect Coach (when necessary) — accents, regional speech.

• Dialogue Coach (on set) (when necessary) — tempo, breath, logical stress.

• Tutor/Child Acting Teacher (when working with minors) — acting methods, child stability.

Rehearsal Coordinator (Assistant to the Performance Director) — rehearsal schedule; video documentation; acting notes protocol; coordination with production schedule.

• Emotional Continuity Script Supervisor — records emotional anchor points; monitors continuity between takes and shooting days.

Background Performance Supervisor (when large-scale extras are involved) — behavioral code of the background: reactions, “ear noise,” physicality in wide shots.

Performance Capture Lead (for mocap projects) — transfers facial expression and physicality into data without loss of character.

Cultural Consultant / Environmental Consultant (for specific settings) — vocabulary, gestures, rituals of the world (medicine, subcultures, etc.).

Actors (principal and supporting) — rehearse, accept adjustments, and carry the final outcome of the department’s work.

It is important to remember: for the role of Performance Director to function effectively and avoid conflict with other creative and technical heads, the boundaries of authority must be clearly defined. The Performance Director must focus on acting and everything related to behavioral authenticity, without attempting to dictate decisions in areas that belong to other competencies. Below is a list of key responsibilities that define the scope of his authority.

1. Preparation and Casting.
   Formulates behavioral guidelines for actors: speech tempo, quality of gaze, personal distance, gestures, bodily habits. The Performance Director turns casting from a photo-based selection into verification of behavioral code: he breaks down the script into gestures, pauses, and intonations, and checks whether the actor can carry themselves in accordance with the portrait of their character.

2. Environmental Research.
   Assembles a “behavioral package” for a specific world: vocabulary, slang, gestures, intonations, rhythm of pauses.

3. Training and Method Translation.
   Refines selected actors so that they perfectly align with the role: works on

speech, physicality, intonation, and behavioral nuances until the character begins to sound authentic. He transforms the actor not merely into a performer of text, but into a person who lives by the code of the role — with its breathing, rhythm, and internal logic.

4. Tonal Calibration.
   Aligns performers within a single aesthetic of performance: prevents one from existing in a theatrical mode while another operates in a sitcom style. He calibrates scale — from the subtlest details in close-up to expressive gestures and emotions in wide shots.

5. Emotional Continuity.
   Ensures that emotion unfolds along a trajectory rather than jumping between takes. In coordination with the script supervisor, he marks anchor points: where anger first flickered, where laughter first broke, where the “break” occurred, and so on.

6. Integration with Other Directors.
   Translates technical language into acting terms: “six-second camera move” equals “a non-verbal choice in the middle of the line.” Prevents conflicts between visual priorities and acting performance.

7. Working in Imperfect Conditions / Crisis Management.
   On set, unexpected disruptions always occur: sudden weather changes, malfunctioning props, delayed extras, and so on. In such situations, he does not ask cinematographers to move the camera or lighting technicians to reposition their fixtures, but “repairs the scene on the fly,” achieving the necessary result with minimal disruption: he adjusts the actor in such a way that the entire scene resonates properly without major structural restructuring.

As follows from the functions described above, the Performance Director is not a coach hired separately to “prepare the actors” and then dismissed. He is a full-fledged director within the system, integrated into the overall process and aware that his work must serve the film as a whole. He understands the objectives of the

Visual Director, the Director of Photography, the Sound Director — and never attempts to dictate how to frame a shot or where to place lighting instruments. His “kingdom” is performance: natural, convincing, unified within a single system.

On set, it is he who evaluates the actors after a take, gives quick adjustments, refines nuances. But when the question concerns what music should underscore a scene, how lighting should shape emphasis, at what speed the camera should move, at what rhythm the edit will later be cut, or how the mise-en-scène is constructed physically — the Performance Director does not command the parade. At the same time, he has the right to enter the discussion, to offer arguments, to point out where sound, lighting, or editing might “kill” a nuance of performance or, conversely, enhance it. He may advise or debate, but the final word always belongs to the respective department heads.

It is important to remember that the Performance Director does not exist in a vacuum: he constantly intersects with the Visual Director, the Narrative Director, and others. It is precisely at these junctions that the system is tested — whether it functions or turns into a conflict of interests.

The Performance Director works closely with the Narrative Director and the Director of Photography, because it is at the intersection of these three roles that a fully realized scene is born. The Narrative Director ensures that the actors’ performances align with dramaturgy and the logic of the story: where the character stands in their journey, what conflict they carry, what shift must occur in the episode. The Performance Director translates this into behavioral language: specific emotions, rhythm of lines, pauses, physical actions. But all of this exists only within the frame, and here the Director of Photography enters — defining boundaries through camera, lighting, and blocking. If the performance does not fit within the light, the scene collapses; if the mise-en-scène ignores dramaturgy, it becomes empty; if dramaturgy and visuals ignore the actor’s organic truth, the frame may be beautiful but lifeless. Therefore, this trio must function as a single organism: the Narrative Director holds meaning, the Performance Director brings it to life through actors, and the Director of Photography transforms it into image.

Now let us examine the role the Performance Director plays across the three stages of production — from preparation to shooting and post-production.

Pre-Production

The Performance Director begins work during pre-production. His path is guided by three “beacons” — reference points between which he must navigate.

The first beacon is the script. Not the text in general, but broken down in detail by scenes and beats: what happens, what objective the episode carries, in what emotional state the character enters and in what state they exit. This is the map of performance dynamics.

The second beacon is the audiovisual solution. Camera, lighting, blocking — they are never neutral. If the camera restricts movement and lighting fixes the actor to a point, performance develops within a “corridor.” The Performance Director must account for these constraints in advance, so as not to demand the impossible from the actor.

The third beacon is the product vector. Who will watch the film, what rating it will carry, what limitations or expectations the platform or festival imposes. This determines emotional amplitude: how far one can go in harshness, expression, improvisation.

Within these three beacons — text, visual constraints, and target vector — the Performance Director constructs the acting plan: character behavior, key pauses, reaction dynamics.

Then come resources — time, people, and money. The Vector Director views them strategically: to prevent the schedule from collapsing, to keep the budget from going negative, to ensure actors are available on required dates. The Performance Director views them differently: if actors are not given at least minimal time for table reads or rehearsal, the set will face total failure. The Vector Director ensures that performance work does not derail the overall course of the film — its festival or commercial objectives. The Performance Director, on the contrary, protects the “magic” and “hypnosis” of performance from being crushed by dry strategic demands. If a conflict

of interest reaches an impasse and their perspectives cannot be reconciled, the final word belongs to the coordinator.

Locations become another layer of alignment. The Performance Director looks at space primarily from the actor’s perspective: is there room to enter, sit, move, circle a partner, step closer or farther; is it possible to construct mise-en-scène so that performance develops rather than turning into a static conversation “on a mark.”

The Director of Photography evaluates the same space differently — can a camera be placed there, how will the light fall, where will compositional lines run.

The Narrative Director looks for something else — whether the location is credible within the logic of the story, whether it matches era, geography, and social environment.

If these perspectives clash and agreement cannot be reached, the coordinator again becomes arbiter: seeking a solution that allows actors to exist organically, the camera to function, and the story to remain truthful.

The scene schedule becomes another friction point. The Vector Director structures it according to locations, equipment, and budget. The Performance Director sees it differently: it is important not to schedule emotionally incompatible scenes back-to-back and to allow actors time to build momentum before heavy drama. If these perspectives are not reconciled, the schedule will be perfect on paper but lifeless for performance.

Casting and availability also require a dual perspective. For the Vector Director, actors are contracts, fees, and available dates. For the Performance Director, they are ensemble, chemistry, and rhythm alignment. Only when both filters align will the set gain living characters and actors whose presence can truly draw an audience.

Production

On set, the balance becomes sharper. The coordinator and Vector Director see the shooting day as a spreadsheet of numbers; the Performance Director sees it as a dynamic flow of energy.

Blocking becomes a collision point between visual and performance priorities. The Director of Photography demands fixed positioning for the sake of the frame; the Performance Director demands freedom for organic behavior. The coordinator arbitrates: either adjust the camera or adapt the movement while preserving balance.

Improvisations, additional reactions, unforeseen discoveries — these are gifts from actors. The Performance Director catches them; the coordinator decides whether deviations from the schedule can be afforded.

During heavy shooting days, actors become physically and emotionally exhausted. The Performance Director understands that after a certain number of takes, performance quality no longer increases but declines. The Vector Director views the situation from another angle: each additional take consumes not only money but time needed for subsequent scenes. Their joint task is to stop at the right moment and secure the optimal result. Too few takes — and the edit lacks necessary material; too many — and the final scene of the day collapses.

Post-Production

During post-production, the Performance Director is involved only partially: editing, color grading, and sound proceed without his direct participation. But he becomes indispensable when reshoots, ADR, or additional voice work are required. It is he who helps actors return to the same emotional state they inhabited on set, so that new lines or scenes integrate organically into the finished material.

Chapter 5 Narrative Director

He is the advocate of story and narrative logic. His area of responsibility is causality, tone and point of view, the integrity of the world, and the credibility of details. He does not “tweak the text”; he ensures that the story breathes the same air at every stage — from pre-production to the final cut in editing.

He begins with the “project bible”: chronology of scenes and events, the “rules of the world” (what is possible, what is taboo), character arc maps, a list of motifs and references, a glossary of jargon, an exposition map (what we tell whom and when), a plan of built-in “promises” and their “payoffs.” In effect, the Narrative Director, starting from the script and source material, creates a “manual” by which everyone else works. At the same time, it is important to note that he does not write instead of the screenwriter and does not frame shots instead of the visual director — he binds their decisions into a single causal fabric.

Responsibilities:

1. **Causality and Logic.**
   All events have motive and consequence. No “the hero suddenly realized.” He maintains a map of causes and narrative “bridges” so that the viewer does not fall into a plot hole.

2. **Chronology and Continuity of Meaning.**
   The Narrative Director ensures that the story develops logically and without “jumps.” He records who knows what at any given point, and who does not; which events have already occurred and which are yet to happen. In other words, he ensures not only that the same glass remains on the table, but that actors and characters exist in the correct emotional and informational state — knowing exactly what they are supposed to know at that moment in the story, trusting or distrusting precisely where justified.

3. **Rules of the World (Lore).**
   The Narrative Director formulates and controls the system of laws by which

the story functions: permissible and impermissible actions, the mechanics of technology, magic, or social institutions. Any exception to the rules requires dramatic motivation and must be embedded into narrative logic; otherwise, the viewer will immediately detect “authorial indulgence,” and trust in the story will collapse.

4. **Tone and Point of View (POV).**
   Determines through whose eyes we perceive a scene and in what emotional register it should sound — realism or stylization, drama or irony. He maintains a unified narrative intonation so the film does not fragment into pieces with conflicting artistic languages.

5. **Exposition and “Promises/Payoffs.”**
   Determines when and in what form key information is given to the viewer. Ensures that introduced “promises” — details, hints, narrative hooks — receive development and resolution. Balances between under-explaining, where the audience becomes lost, and over-explaining, which kills tension.

6. **Character Arcs.**
   Tracks personal trajectories: where the turning point begins, at what moment the character shifts strategy, when they pay for their choices. Ensures each scene advances the arc rather than stagnates, and that transformations are gradual and coherent rather than abrupt jumps.

7. **Cross-Department Narrative Alignment.**
   Translates the demands of the story into the language of other departments: what must be seen, heard, understood. Has the authority to issue a “stop signal” on decisions that undermine causality.

8. **Project Documentation Base.**
   Maintains the “bible”: timeline, scene maps, glossary, world rules, knowledge chart, list of motifs/leitmotifs, promise/payoff map. This is a working tool for everyone.

Interaction Across Departments

With the Production Designer and art department (set decorator, prop master, set dresser), he transforms space into a narrator: objects with history, levels of wear, “documentation on the walls,” color and texture that suggest the biography of place and people.

With the Costume Designer and makeup department, he builds color and status arcs: how palette, silhouette, and appearance details evolve over the course of the story; where costume masks the character and where it reveals their true state.

With the Director of Photography, he discusses point of view (whose gaze leads the scene), camera distance, and informational “weight” within the frame: what is concealed, what is hinted at, where we provide “non-verbal evidence.”

With the Performance Director, he synchronizes logic of knowledge: what the character already knows, what they do not yet know, where the internal turn occurs — so that behavior aligns with dramaturgy rather than simply “beautiful acting.”

With the Editing Director and editor, he constructs the rhythm of information delivery to the audience, ensuring exposition does not suffocate the narrative and intrigue is not broken by informational gaps; identifies where a cutaway or detail close-up is needed, and where a scene must “exhale.”

With the Sound Director and composer, he ensures music and silence do not undermine narrative logic: that the sound palette does not prematurely reveal plot turns, and motifs do not contradict character arcs. Decisions about timbre, volume, and sound editing remain with the sound department, but the Narrative Director ensures that sound strengthens rather than breaks the story.

With the VFX Supervisor, he safeguards the logic of invented rules. For example: if dragon fire melts metal earlier in the film, it cannot suddenly stop affecting iron gates in the finale.

With the Script Supervisor, he maintains continuity of meaning: knowledge, relationships, trust levels, wounds and their consequences.

He verifies whether the actor's emotional state aligns with the previous take; whether the character's knowledge has changed; whether lines or actions contradict established logic. He immediately flags moments where a plot hole may emerge and proposes solutions.

In editing, he performs "narrative sanitation": cutting beloved sequences if they betray the theme; requesting ADR not for vocal beauty but for clarity of motivation; compiling a list of adjustments and reshoots without which the story "limps." His right of final word applies exclusively within the domain of plot logic and lore — here he has the "red stop button." In other territories — lighting, framing, music, physical staging — he is a participant in discussion, an intelligent advisor, but not a dictator.

Now let us examine the role of the Narrative Director across the three stages of production — from the earliest pre-production tables to the final sound mix.

Pre-Production

During preparation, the Narrative Director works with the dramaturgical framework. He breaks the script into nodes of information: what the audience must know, what remains hidden, where intrigue is planted. With the Production Designer and art department, he ensures that space itself hints at narrative lines: interior details, object wear, layers of time on walls. With costume and makeup, he constructs character arcs — not only through color, but through transformations of status, psychology, and social mask.

At this stage, he actively collaborates with the Director of Photography: whose POV dominates the scene, how the camera becomes a carrier of knowledge — distance,

angle, informational selection within the frame. All of this determines how the viewer will “read” the story even before dialogue begins.

Production

During shooting, he ensures scenes do not fall out of overall logic. The Performance Director works with acting truth, but it is the Narrative Director who reminds everyone what the character already knows — or cannot yet know — at this point in the story. Together with the Script Supervisor, he maintains continuity of knowledge, wounds, trust, and relationships.

With the Director of Photography, he verifies that the chosen shot conveys the necessary volume of information: sometimes a subtle hint is enough; sometimes a close-up on a detail is required to fix a narrative fact. In dialogue with background performers, costume, and makeup, he protects character arcs — ensuring that yesterday’s emotional state does not reappear incorrectly in today’s frame.

Post-Production

In editing, the Narrative Director works alongside the Editing Director and the Director of Photography: where to accelerate information delivery, where to allow pause, where to insert a cutaway to prevent exposition overload. In close collaboration with the Sound Director and composer, he ensures that the sonic fabric does not destroy tension: music must not reveal twists prematurely, and silence must serve meaning.

With the VFX Supervisor, as stated earlier, he monitors the internal logic of invented rules: if a creature behaves a certain way in the first scene, it cannot “accidentally” violate those laws in the finale. Narrative consistency is not abstraction — it is the guarantee that the audience will believe the story to the very end.

Chapter 6 Editing Director

This specialist becomes involved already at the storyboarding stage: together with the Visual Director and the Director of Photography, he outlines entry and exit points for scenes, builds in “handles” for cuts, transition options, and a coverage map (which shots are mandatory, without which the scene will not assemble). On set, he is at the monitor, checking not only that what is shot is beautiful, but that it cuts together: whether takes have heads and tails, whether axis and eyelines match, whether there are enough reactions and (in the case of television content) cutaways. If something is missing, he immediately calls for a pick-up while the set, actors, and lighting are still in place. In post-production, he cuts shots without sentimentality, rearranges scene order, builds bridges, and brings the film to a state of editorial precision.

The Editing Director works in close alignment with the Visual Director and the Director of Photography. The latter are responsible for the “beautiful language of the frame,” while the Editing Director translates “beautiful” into “assemble-able”: he ensures that every movement has an entry and exit, every glance has an address, every effect has a “bandage” for the cut. Where the image wants to outrun the story, he tightens the leash; where the story drowns in visual excess, he cuts into living tissue.

Why should this be a separate role today? Because modern production is fragmented: parallel units, VFX plates, compressed shooting days, a ton of improvisation and “playback euphoria,” and so on. Without a person whose job is to think in editing terms before, during, and after shooting, the film enters a risk zone.

Responsibilities:

Editing and Coverage Map.
Already at the storyboard stage, he breaks the script into editorial units and marks “mandatory” shots for cutting: action entries/exits, reactions, match-on-action, establishing shots. He creates a coverage map without which a scene physically cannot be assembled.

Axis and Eyelines.
Determines in advance where the 180-degree rule must not be broken, and how to execute an axis break without disorienting the viewer; locks eyelines so that lines and reactions “look” at one another.

Transitions and Bridges.
Designs transition methods: visual rhymes, cutaways, prelap/overlap in sound, places for hard and soft cuts. Builds safety inserts and clean plates so the production does not have to return to set because of a single seam.

On Set: Take Viability.
Watches playback through editorial eyes: whether takes have heads and tails, whether tempo matches, whether the axis drifted, whether there are enough reactions. If not, he immediately requests a pick-up or insert while the set and actors remain in place.

Translating Editorial Needs into Performance Tasks.

In coordination with the Performance Director, formulates precise markers: “a non-verbal choice mid-line,” “half a second more of eye contact,” “a clean exit from action.” This is how “handles” for cutting appear without restructuring departments.

Alignment with Visual Director and DOP.
If angle, focus, or lens length undermines the possibility of cutting, he argues for necessary adjustments: a counter-shot, trajectory correction, alternative wide shot. The goal is simple — the beautiful shot must also cut.

Editorial Readability in Post.
Assembles scenes so that the viewer understands and feels in the intended sequence: where to allow a full pause, where to use a close-up for meaning, where an additional shot connects actions and prevents confusion. Cuts “beloved moments” if they destroy rhythm or causality.

Adjustments and “Invisible” Fixes.
Prepares reshoot lists, initiates subtle VFX fixes (split-screen, speed ramp, seam

clean-up). Communicates intentions further: where color should mask a graphic artifact, where music should hide excess noise, where silence must remain.

As you have likely understood, the Editing Director in the overall system is the assembly point. Unlike the editor, who physically assembles material in software, the Editing Director is responsible for editorial strategy at every stage. In pre-production, he breaks the script into editorial units and forms the coverage map; during shooting, he verifies that sufficient material has been captured for cutting; in post-production, together with the editor, he makes key decisions about rhythm and structure. Modern production is too fragmented to think about editing only “at the finish” — without this role, a film easily becomes a set of beautiful shots that do not assemble into a story.

Because the Editing Director holds the entire film in mind as a system of cuts and transitions, his work is almost always conducted in coordination with other orbits:

With the Director of Photography.
For both, the priority is visual beauty, light plasticity, composition. However, for the Editing Director, the primary task is ensuring that this beauty assembles into coherent rhythm. If the chosen lens or blocking kills the possibility of a counter-shot, he insists on changes. He reminds: every glance must have an address, every action an entry and exit. His job is to translate aesthetics into editorial viability.

With the Performance Director.
Together they formulate “handles” for cuts: half a second longer glance, pause mid-line, clean exit from action. Where the Performance Director focuses on organic acting, the Editing Director simultaneously considers how that organic behavior will function in assembly.

With the Narrative Director.
One is responsible for story logic, the other for the logic of its delivery. Narrative defines where the viewer must learn key information; editing determines how to deliver it — through a cutaway, a close-up, or a pause. Their dialogue determines where the story speaks and where it remains silent.

With the Sound Director and Composer.
Editing shapes rhythm; sound supports or disrupts it. Prelaps, overlaps, silence as

transition, motif as bridge — all require coordination. The Editing Director holds timing; sound adds emotional layer.

With the VFX Supervisor.
Not every cut is solved on set. Sometimes a split-screen, speed ramp, or inserted plate is needed. The Editing Director compiles such tasks and passes them to VFX. This ensures assembly issues do not undermine the finished film.

With the Script Supervisor.
The Script Supervisor records what was shot, which takes work, where eyelines align. The Editing Director compares this with the coverage map and signals in time: an additional shot or reaction is needed.

Now let us traditionally examine the role of the Editing Director across the three production stages.

Pre-Production

During preparation, the Editing Director enters the process in order to pre-design the “assemble-ability” of the material. Together with the Director of Photography, he defines entry and exit points of scenes — where action “cuts into” the frame and where it leaves; agrees on anchors for match-on-action (specific gestures, position changes, head turns) that allow clean cuts.

With the Narrative Director, he calculates informational beats: what the viewer must learn in this segment and which shot must secure it (close-up on detail, reaction, establishing). With the Performance Director, he translates dramaturgy into behavioral “handles” for post: half a second of gaze before a line, pause on inhale, “clean exit” from action — micro-markers without which the cut breaks.

In parallel, he assembles the coverage map: required angles, necessary cutaways (hands, watches, facades, clean plates without actors), planned prelap/overlap in sound. With the VFX Supervisor, he plans invisible fixes: static plates, clean backgrounds, repeatable actions on one axis — allowing later stitching via split-screen, retiming, morph cuts.

He provides the Script Supervisor in advance with logging logic: which lines and actions are anchor points, where to mark a take as “cut-bearing.” With production management (Vector Director / Line Producer), he synchronizes this within the schedule: which “insurance” shots cannot be cut even under tight budget, otherwise a reshoot will cost double.

Production

On set, the Editing Director sits at the monitor not for “beautiful/ugly,” but for take viability. He monitors axis integrity (180-degree rule), eyeline consistency, tempo across takes, presence of heads and tails (so movement does not break at the seam).

If reactions are not embedded in the material, he immediately requests them: neutral, positive, negative, micro-shifts on half a word — inexpensive saviors in post. If wide, medium, and close-up shots do not match in focal length or visual plasticity, he speaks with the Director of Photography: adjust focus, add counter-shot, correct trajectory.

With the Performance Director, he formulates micro-tasks in playback: “hold the gaze three more frames,” “exit after the word,” “leave silence before partner’s reaction.” With sound, he gathers room tone and wild lines to avoid constructing ADR from nothing. With the Script Supervisor, he synchronizes notes (“circled takes,” continuity, “axis drifted,” “no tail”) — navigation for post.

Most importantly, he does not hesitate to take quick pick-ups “while everything stands.” Thirty seconds now saves a day and money later.

Post-Production

Once the material is shot, the Editing Director works alongside the editor as strategist and assembles the rough cut.

At this stage, with the Narrative Director, he calibrates information dosage: where to let pause “breathe,” where to insert a cutaway, where to replace a line with a reaction. With sound and composer, he pre-structures bridges: prelap into the next location, noise overlap, silence as transition, musical tail holding the cut.

With VFX, he closes seams: split-screen to combine best halves of takes, retime/speed ramp to synchronize gestures and glances, stabilization and artifact clean-up so the seam disappears under color and sound. With the colorist, he aligns seam masking: level matching, contrast compression at cuts, skin tone equalization across shots.

He compiles adjustment lists: targeted reshoots, ADR, insert shots of city or objects that stitch logical gaps. Together with the Vector Director, he makes adult decisions about versions: festival runtime versus broadcast window, alternative openings and endings for platforms, where to cut without breaking the authorial nerve.

Ultimately, without an Editing Director, a film risks becoming a collection of beautiful but unconnectable images. His work is not only to guarantee that every scene has a workable seam and transition, but to build dynamic structure: preserve dramatic tempo, enhance rhythm, correctly place pauses and accents. He ensures not just technical cohesion, but the artistic energy of the film — the force that holds the viewer.

Chapter 7 Sound Director

The Sound Director is fully responsible for the dramaturgy of sound — from the opening titles to the final track.

He works in coordination with everyone, especially the sound designer and composer: in pre-production he develops the sonic concept and leitmotif map; on set, together with the production mixer, he ensures usable material; in post-production he oversees design and mix so that sound supports POV, tone, and narrative causality rather than competing with them.

Responsibilities:

Sonic Concept and World Palette.
During pre-production he establishes the rules of how the story sounds: what is heard “within the world” (diegetic), what functions as an authorial layer, which characters have leitmotifs, and which timbres or instruments are incompatible with the world. He determines where music must remain silent by principle and where it is allowed to enter.

Silence Points and Accent Windows.
He maps where silence is required; where pre-lap/overlap is needed (sound of the next scene before image and vice versa); where a pause must be allowed to fully resonate. He creates “windows” for key glances, gestures, and meanings — so that sound does not steamroll them.

Aural POV (Perspective).
Determines through whose ears we hear the scene: subjectively (muffled, through a door, through the character’s breathing) or objectively (full world perspective). Synchronizes this with visual and narrative direction so that ear and eye share the same narrator.

On-Set Risk Register and Backup Plan.
Before shooting he identifies “noisy” risks in locations and props (traffic, neon, air conditioners, rustling costumes), plans room tone, wild lines, clean tails, and short ambient layers — so that a single seam does not require reshooting.

On Set: Sound Viability.

He ensures that the primary dramatic line is always audible and does not dissolve into environmental noise. If there is risk of losing meaning, he flags it and secures alternative recordings suitable for editing. His task is to preserve clarity of performance and priority of key sonic accents so that post-production does not have to patch performance with artificial crutches.

Synchronization with Performance and Visual Direction.

Together with the Performance Director, he coordinates pauses, breaths, unspoken choices — preparing sonic space for them. With the Visual Director and DOP, he determines where the camera may “hear closely” and where sound must remain background so that the frame does not lose semantic layers.

Sound Editing and Design.

Supervises dialogue edit, Foley, and ambience so that the acoustic space remains continuous — reverb, spatial distance, and shot changes should not tear the ear. Adds sonic motifs and rhymes that connect scenes (in meaning, naturally).

Music as Narrative Instrument.

During spotting sessions with the composer, defines entry and exit points of music so that it does not spoil twists or contradict character arcs. Where silence is required — he protects silence. Where a motif supports subtext — he gives it room.

Final Mix and Priority Balance.

Together with re-recording mixers, establishes hierarchy: dialogue > action > music (or another order if required by the scene). Ensures meaning reads across different playback systems; oversees ADR corrections.

As you have likely understood, the Sound Director is not responsible for technical quality alone, but for the dramaturgy of sound. His task is to give the story its own acoustic language: when to remain silent, when to resonate, through whose ears we hear the scene, and so on. To achieve this, he works in interaction with all key orbits — from narrative and performance to cinematography, composition, and final mix.

Interaction Structure:

With the Narrative Director.

They define the dramaturgy of information together. Narrative marks when the viewer receives knowledge and when the turning point occurs. The Sound Director translates this into acoustics: where silence must allow the viewer to “hear” meaning; where a sound detail hints at a fact before words; where music must remain silent to preserve suspense. Thus ear and eye function as a single narrator.

With the Performance Director.

The Performance Director builds acting on pauses, breaths, and unspoken choices. The Sound Director ensures these micro-moments are not crushed by noise or music. He preserves sonic windows for them and supervises ADR so the actor can reproduce the same emotional state — otherwise editing loses authenticity.

With the Director of Photography.

They determine how visual and auditory perspective align. If the camera is close, the viewer must hear subjectively: breathing, spatial muffling, heartbeat. If the frame is wide and distant, sound must remain objective and provide full environmental context. Their alignment defines the scene’s point of view.

With the Editing Director.

Here they shape rhythm. Editing may cut image, but sound can soften or emphasize the break. They decide where transitions occur through sound before image (prelap) or after (overlap). If a visual cut creates a jump, the Sound Director finds motif, ambience, or musical rhyme to bridge scenes. The viewer experiences flow even when images contrast sharply.

Now let us examine the Sound Director’s role across the three stages of production. If we intend to strengthen the role and influence of sound, it cannot be “pushed into post” under the traditional model. Sonic dramaturgy is not born at the end; it must be designed in advance — from world concept and leitmotifs in pre-production to take control on set and final mix.

Pre-Production

During preparation, the Sound Director forms the film's sonic concept. Together with the Narrative Director, he defines how the story "speaks acoustically": where sound carries information, where silence builds tension, where detail hints at meaning before words. With the Director of Photography, he agrees on perspective: if the camera is within a character's subjective perception, sound must also be subjective; if the camera is objective, sound must remain objective. With the composer, he builds the leitmotif map: which characters and themes have sonic signatures, where music may enter, and where it must remain silent.

He also works with location management and production management: identifies noise risks (traffic, air conditioners, noisy props) and plans backups — room tone, wild lines, clean tails — so production does not return to set because of one seam.

Production

During shooting, the Sound Director ensures that the main dramatic layer remains audible. If an actor's line is lost in noise, he secures another take or alternative recording. In coordination with the Performance Director, he protects pauses, breaths, and "unspoken choices," preserving sonic space for them.

With cinematography and visual direction, he aligns perspective: where microphones may move closer for subjective effect and where sound must remain background. He works through production mixers and boom operators, but ultimately he decides material viability: whether takes are sufficient, whether a wild track is needed, whether additional layers must be recorded.

Post-Production

In post-production, the Sound Director supervises all sonic layers:

Dialogue Edit and ADR. Ensures clean cuts and energy/intention match in re-recorded lines.

Foley and Atmosphere. Maintains spatial continuity so that footsteps, rustle, and acoustic environment do not break scenes.

Sound Design. Adds motifs and accents that connect scenes and reinforce dramaturgy.

With the Narrative Director, he verifies that sound does not undermine story causality. With the Editing Director, he aligns rhythm: prelap, overlap, sonic rhymes. With the composer, he determines entry and exit of music and protects silence where it functions more powerfully.

In the final mix, together with re-recording mixers, he establishes priority: dialogue, action, or music depending on the scene. He checks balance across playback systems (cinema, television, headphones) to ensure meaning remains clear.

Thus, the Sound Director ensures that the film’s sonic fabric moves in unison with image and editing — telling the same story, supporting the intended rhythm, and resonating as a unified voice.

Chapter 8 Director of Photography (DoP)

In this book, I have deliberately отказался from a separate role of “Visual Director.” That function already exists — it is the Director of Photography (DoP). And it is precisely this role that we expand and reinforce. Because his responsibilities include far more than simply “placing the camera.” More than that: he does not move cameras at all, does not press REC, but is responsible first and foremost for the film’s visual language — lighting, optics, camera movement, composition, and image rhythm.

Often the DoP’s work remains in the director’s shadow. We admire the “shooting style” of Tarantino, del Toro, Spielberg, Nolan, Fincher, Villeneuve — but forget that many of these people, however harsh it may sound, would hardly be able to turn on a camera or properly set a lens themselves. At best, they would simply not break it. There are exceptions — naturals like Kubrick, who came from photography and knew the mechanics of camera and optics inside out — but in most cases the director expresses ideas extremely abstractly, through metaphors and broad imagery, and the DoP’s job is to translate that riddle into technical and artistic decisions. And if the DoP is weak, even the most brilliant director risks ending up with a ruined film.

This is where the injustice lies. Every viewer knows the names of directors and actors. You can easily recall who made *Jaws* — but can you name that film’s DoP? You will instantly name the director and actors of *Pulp Fiction* — but who chose the angles, lit the set, and decided which lens and filter served the scene? Exactly.

An untrained viewer can list a dozen directors and actors, yet cannot name even five Directors of Photography.

The reason is simple: directors’ egos and mass attention have washed DoP names out of the frame. So by expanding the DoP’s authority and fully handing over control of the visual domain to him, we not only structure responsibilities according to the leaders’ actual expertise, but also restore historical fairness. From now on, everything related to image — light, framing, composition, camera movement, color,

and texture — is assigned to the DoP. And all credit for the film's visual language should belong to him, rather than dissolving into the director's shadow.

To make it clear what this responsibility zone includes, below are his key functions as they should look in the expanded model:

Responsibilities and Functions

Storyboards and Shooting Script.
The DoP participates in storyboarding from the very beginning: together with the Editing Director he defines key frames, entry and exit points, and the dynamics of camera movement. He translates the script into a visual map that accounts for dramaturgy and editorial viability.

Visual Concept and Language.
The DoP assembles a lookbook and color script, defines format and aspect ratio, the character of optics and camera movement, the degree of stylization. He fixes rules: where the film is static, where handheld is used, where grotesque or expressive distortion is permissible.

Mise-en-scène and Frame Geometry.
Together with the Performance Director, the DoP builds the placement of actors and objects in space, sets depth, layers, silhouettes, and eyelines. He ensures the action remains readable: who is primary, what is secondary, where the viewer's attention concentrates.

Distance, Angle, and Camera Movement.
The DoP defines POV through the camera's eyes: how close to hold the character, when and why to move the camera. He articulates the motivation for every move — a move for meaning, not for beauty. He selects grammar: crane, Steadicam, tripod, and the speed and plasticity of movement.

Light as Dramaturgy.
The DoP is responsible for the meaning of light: source, direction, degree of realism, contrast, color temperature. Light stops being merely technical — it becomes a storytelling tool.

Color and the World Palette.

Together with the Narrative Director and the Production Designer, costume, and makeup (more on this collaboration later), he defines scene palettes and the visual accompaniment of character arcs. During preparation he sets LUTs and references for color correction, forms the tonal “window” so scenes do not drift chromatically.

VFX Integration and Previs.

He defines what must truly exist in frame and what will be added later. Determines parallax and tracking parameters, clean plates. Ensures effects serve the frame’s dramaturgy rather than replace it.

Controlling Deviations on Set.

The DoP holds the frame at the monitor and checks it against the concept. In force majeure (weather, time of day, unexpected location), he makes decisions on correcting angle, staging, or light so that the visual language remains coherent.

Second Unit and Parallel Teams.

He forms a “frame bible”: composition, movement, and lighting standards. Reviews second-unit and parallel-team tests so their material does not feel alien within the film.

Color Grading and Final Validation.

Together with the Editing Director and colorist, he approves reference scenes, controls global and local contrast, saturation, skin tones. After VFX integration, he aligns scenes into one system so the film feels unified from first frame to last.

Now let us examine how the Director of Photography works across all production stages, since his responsibility begins long before shooting and ends only at final color grading.

Pre-Production

DoP work begins not with the “REC” button, but with building a visual system. First comes the decision on format and capture medium: sensor, crop, aspect ratio (1.85/2.39/1.33), frame rate, shutter angle, dynamic range, color management (ACES or a custom IDT–ODT pipeline). In parallel, the lookbook and color script are

assembled: not a folder of pretty pictures, but a map of tonal and contrast transitions across the story, showing how light and color shift through character arcs (visual accompaniment of arcs is not dramaturgy, but light/contrast/palette — “how it looks”).

Next: lenses and optics. Lenses are tested for sharpness, breathing, geometry, chromatic behavior, bokeh character, performance in backlight. A “working stop” is chosen (for example, T2.8–4 for stable depth and lighting headroom). Optics are character: some lenses give “air” (soft contrast, smooth rendering, slight aberrations, dimensionality), others give “glass” (sharpness, high micro-contrast, cold clinical image). The DoP locks this character.

Light as dramaturgy is designed in advance: sources (motivation), direction, key-to-fill ratios, contrast tolerances, work with texture (smoke, haze, dust), temperature and its narrative shifts. Lighting схемes and prelight plans are prepared, where it is clear how many kilowatts/lifts/flags are actually required — not “bring it and we’ll see.”

Then comes storyboarding and the shooting script through the DoP’s eyes: action entry/exit points, where the camera is static, where it moves and why; which shots are mandatory, without which the scene physically cannot be assembled; where coverage is intended and where deliberate austerity is chosen. At this stage, camera-movement grammar is also defined (Steadicam/crane/dolly/tripod/handheld) and permissible speeds/amplitudes — so movement is motivated rather than “we ran around for energy.”

The color pipeline is prepared in advance: working LUTs are created (on-set/director’s/editing), metadata transfer from set is specified so dailies do not live separately from the final look. Separately, the VFX plan: where “clean plates” are required, which markers, what parallax is mandatory so tracking does not become a headache; what is shot practically and what is painted — aimed at the final look (not “they’ll fix it later,” as directors often push their mistakes into post).

And the final pre-production deliverable is the “Frame Bible” for second unit and parallel teams: composition, lighting, movement standards, skin tones, “how night/day/office/street looks in our film.” Without it, parallel material always feels чужим.

Production

On set, the DoP is the stabilizer of the language. Every setup is checked against what was promised in pre-production: exposure via false color/waveform, white balance, contrast, whether “skin lives” inside its corridor. Director monitors are calibrated so no one makes decisions off a distorted image. If conditions change (weather, time, the “window blows out”), the DoP rebuilds the scheme while preserving language rules: changes angles, re-pulls source motivation, adds flags/NDs/diffusion so the result remains the same film.

Mise-en-scène and geometry are checked for readability: who is primary in frame, how depth functions, whether silhouettes are cramped, where the axis runs, where eyes look. If a shot is “beautiful” but does not cut (no action entry/exit, no counter-shot), the DoP makes practical corrections: adds a reaction, changes focal length, requests a clean detail. Beauty without editorial viability is garbage.

The DoP controls camera movement as meaning: if movement adds no information (POV, spatial reveal, shift in character power), it is removed. If it adds, speed is locked, start/stop points, action anchors — so it does not fall apart later. In parallel, he monitors atmosphere in the air (smoke/haze): it is a friend of contrast and an enemy of continuity, so it is introduced дозировано and reproducibly.

With the DIT and camera department, the DoP keeps metadata in order: CDL, “hero take” marks, notes on “how this should look in dailies.” Dailies QC is mandatory: flicker, banding, moiré, dangerous highlights, failed skin are caught. If a systemic issue is detected — it is corrected the same day, not “we’ll save it later.”

Post-Production

In post, the DoP is not a guest but a full co-author alongside the Editing Director. Together they ensure the film looks coherent and convincing.

The DoP’s task is to preserve the visual language established in pre-production and on set and carry it to final.

The Editing Director’s task is to assemble the story so it breathes rhythm and logic: reorder, shorten, connect, make room for pauses and accents.

Working in tandem, they decide on perceptual rhythm: where to give the viewer silence and space to process, and where, наоборот, to increase pace without letting attention drift. They decide which shots must remain expressive accents — a close look, a detail, a panorama — and which should recede, serving only as connective tissue.

But it is precisely at this boundary that conflicts begin. A beautiful shot may tear editorial rhythm, stretching a scene longer than the story needs. And a perfectly assembled tempo sometimes kills visual refinement, leaving the film “correct” but flat. In such moments, their work becomes a search for balance — not between “beautiful” and “clear,” but between truth of perception and cohesion of language.

And here their key function is visible: they turn a set of scenes into a coherent statement. The film becomes not merely a series of successful shots and successful dramaturgical decisions, but a unified experience — where eye and ear move in the same rhythm, and every shot, every accent serves the overall sensation. If balance is found, the viewer notices neither editing nor color grading: they simply believe the film’s world and live it as reality.

Chapter 9 Vector Director

He doesn’t kill ideas, he filters them. He keeps the ones that serve the mission, and gently cuts away the ones that turn the film into a structure alien to itself. Thanks to him, the picture can be carried to success: festival or commercial, but always specific.

And this is where everything begins. The Vector Director shapes the project’s initial field. Guided by the film’s goals, he assembles the directing team: who handles narrative, who handles performance, who handles sound design, visuals, editing. But here’s the key: although he selects the people, they do not report to him directly. His job is not to command them, but to find the “right formula” in the form of specialists whose combined force will take the film to the expected outcome. In other words, the Vector Director is not a “king of the hill,” he’s the one holding the compass.

And the selection is always situational. If we’re making a bold experiment for Cannes, the team is built from young, aggressive directors ready to risk form and break rules. If the project is commercial, you bring in the industry’s heavy sharks who know how to guarantee a result and keep production from collapsing. If you need a hybrid, you assemble a mixed crew: creative avant-gardists alongside experienced craftsmen who can contain chaos.

The Vector Director works closely with producers at every level. He is not a manager but a creative unit, a translator between the “business front” and the “creative front.” With producers he discusses market realities, budgets, festival strategies. With the directing team he speaks the language of art and creative method. His job is to make sure those two languages actually match.

And his work doesn’t end with post-production. In distribution and promotion, the Vector Director continues to hold course. He goes to festival labs, pitch forums, industry events, sets up private screenings for closed rooms, frames the film for juries and curators. His goal is not only to make the film, but to deliver it to the audience, to put it right between the teeth of the people it was made for.

The Vector Director is the guarantee that the film will travel from idea to viewer, bypassing the chaos of creative ambition and the chaos of the market.

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Now let's structure all this and clearly define his functions:

Functions

Defining the Mission.
In pre-production, together with the producer and the Coordinating Director, he locks the film's task: a festival statement, a commercial drama, a co-production project. This becomes the foundational manifesto that the Vector Director uses to pull colleagues back when they drift off course.

Selecting the Directing Team.
From the very start, he builds the roster of "orbital" directors: narrative, performance, editing, sound, visual (DoP). He does this based on the project's goals. One thing is a brilliant solo artist; another is a team where ideas resonate. He looks not only at portfolios but also at psychological compatibility, the ability to argue without destroying, and the capacity to adapt to a shared course. Selection is not "the best in the profession," but "the best for this specific project."

Oversight of Storyboards and Style.
At the storyboarding stage, he monitors whether visual and dramatic decisions align with the mission: keeping a commercial film away from niche arthouse drift, and keeping an auteur project away from popcorn predictability. He corrects visual decisions so form does not kill the addressee.

Presence on Set.
On set, he watches material through the audience's eyes: whether the main idea gets lost in staging, performance tempo, or visual flourishes. If a take is beautiful but irrelevant to the mission, he intervenes. He works primarily in tandem with the producer and serves as a bridge between "industry" and the "creative collective." This person understands both.

Interim Checkpoints.
During shooting and immediately after, he organizes internal screenings of footage and gives notes so the film doesn't diverge from the concept. He intervenes in the editing plan together with the Editing Director: checking that structure supports meaning, not only rhythm.

Focus in Post.
In editing and post-production, he initiates test screenings and synthesizes feedback. His job is to filter noise and translate notes into concrete directing adjustments: speed up pacing, remove overloaded scenes, add clarifying elements.

Linking Producer and Market.
In constant contact with the producer, he communicates which artistic choices help the film "survive to the viewer," and which threaten its viability. He also explains to the creative team what constraints come from distributors, festivals, and the market.

Balancing Budget and Ambition.
Together with the line producer, the Vector Director balances financial limits against the team's creative ambitions. Sometimes he advocates for artists and insists on extra costs for artistic value; other times he defends the budget and cuts ideas that could sink the whole project. His job is equilibrium: keep the film alive without letting it collapse under its own expenses.

So the Vector Director's work is built not on shots and not on acting, but on constant dialogue with other orbits. Each colleague pulls the film toward their craft: the DoP toward beauty, narrative toward lore, performance toward nuance, sound toward experimentation. All of them are right in their own way. But the Vector Director checks these impulses against the film's overall goal — festival, market, audience. He is the one who returns the team to the film's shared purpose. That's why his work is best seen through how he interacts with everyone else:

Interactions

With the Line Producer.

Here the Vector Director meets the main counterweight to his ideas: a spreadsheet of numbers. The line producer ensures the shoot physically happens within budget: paid days, built sets, transport, locations. But numbers mean nothing if they don't match the film's mission. So the Vector Director becomes a bridge: if the DoP's or designer's idea is truly necessary, he persuades the producer to allocate resources. If ambition threatens to blow the budget and bury the project, he becomes the budget's advocate and cuts the excess.

With the DoP.

The DoP thinks in frames and light, and the temptation is obvious: long camera moves, rare expensive glass, golden-hour shooting with a hundred kilowatts. It's beautiful, but not always aligned with the film's mission. The Vector Director checks every choice: does it actually help reach the goal? If it's a festival film, visual refinement may be justified. If it's built for wide release, overly stretched form kills pace. The Vector Director doesn't dictate; he holds the line: "beautiful" cannot block "for whom."

With the Narrative Director.

Narrative loves complexity: layers of subtext, tricky arcs, refusing familiar tropes. Useful, necessary, but risky: the film can become a puzzle only a narrow circle understands. The Vector Director reminds: if it's a festival film, complexity is allowed; if it's market-facing, the story must remain accessible. He doesn't simplify for the sake of simplification, he keeps it within the chosen addressee.

With the Performance Director.

Here the question is scale of acting. The Performance Director may get obsessed with micro-nuance: chamber-level plasticity, pauses, barely visible gestures. Valuable, but not always right for commercial cinema where the audience expects emotional openness. Or the opposite: too much expressiveness can kill a festival statement where restraint matters. The Vector Director calibrates balance: what acting mode fits the project and where to pull back or inject more energy.

With the Editing Director.

Here the Vector Director looks through audience eyes. Editing can drift into

experiment: jagged rhythm, reverse chronology, bold associations. Interesting, but it may lose the viewer. The other extreme is even more dangerous: the film grows in length. Beautiful scenes the team is afraid to cut turn the picture into a three-hour marathon that neither festival nor market will survive. So the Vector Director initiates interim screenings — internal, focus groups — and checks whether structure works. His job is not to rewrite editing technique, but to ensure the film stays coherent and the viewer gets what the project was meant to deliver.

With the Sound Director.
Sound can drastically shift perception: add pathos, over-dramatize, break a comedic tone. The Sound Director may fall in love with concept: silence in a battle, overload of noise, experimental timbres. The Vector Director checks: does it serve the mission? If festival, risk may be worth it. If market, it might be a disaster. He doesn't ban ideas; he asks the only question that matters: will it help reach the goal?

With the Coordinator.
The Coordinator reconciles orbit interests, but in disputes he often relies on the Vector Director's position. The reason is simple: the others defend their departments — image, sound, acting, dramaturgy — while Vector looks at the project as a whole. He alone is responsible not for a fragment, but for a concrete final objective: festival, market, audience. So when compromise is hard, his argument gives the Coordinator a foundation for the final call.

Summing up: the Vector Director is a creative unit that holds the project on the line between auteur statement and achieving a goal: festival, market, audience. Without him, the film risks drifting into empty self-expression or dissolving into safe mediocrity. With him, the film keeps its purpose, and the team keeps its orientation.

How is this different from a Producer?

A fair question that may occur to anyone, because both work with the film's goals. In reality, it's a pairing where one cannot replace the other.

A producer thinks in resources: budget, timelines, partners, co-productions, legal frameworks, rights. His task is to ensure the project physically exists: that there is

money and means to shoot, that funds and TV channels are involved, that schedules match actor and location availability.

The Vector Director works with the same project, but on the axis of artistic course. His focus is not “how to pay for it” or “who to sign with,” but “why we are making it” and “what result we must deliver to the viewer or festival.” He translates every artistic decision into the language of mission. If a producer says, “we have a partner, but they demand a star actor,” the Vector asks, “does that serve the film’s mission or break its artistic integrity?”

Their partnership works like this: the producer brings resources and constraints, the Vector translates them into creative strategy. The producer guarantees the film reaches the set and the market; the Vector guarantees meaning doesn’t get lost along the way. One is responsible for the film being made; the other for it being made for a specific purpose.

And to better understand the Vector Director’s scope, as with the previous roles, we will break the activity down by key stages of filmmaking.

Development

The Vector Director begins long before pre-production — at the development stage. When there is no approved script, budget, or team yet, he enters the process and tests what trajectory the future project can realistically fit into. At this stage he works with the roughest materials — the idea, the pitch, the treatment. His task is to determine what kind of film this is, who it is addressed to, and why it is even worth launching the process. He sets the first coordinates: festival statement, genre film with market potential, or something else.

At the development stage, the Vector Director also acts as a navigator for producers. He explains the value of the concept and translates the creative idea into the language of goals and strategy. His position helps decide whether the project is worth developing further, in what format — feature, series, documentary — and what road it can take to the viewer. In effect, he becomes the architect of course before money and people appear, without which the film cannot exist.

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Pre-Production

During preparation, the Vector Director sets the initial course. Together with the producer he defines the film's purpose: whether it is a festival statement aimed at selection in Venice or Cannes, a commercial drama for wide release, or a co-production project oriented toward international funds. This decision becomes a kind of project "map" that everyone returns to later.

Next he shapes the directing group. This is "casting directors": narrative, performance, visual, editing, sound.

Together with the Coordinator, he participates in early discussions of the script, storyboards, and visual language. His role is to constantly check whether the chosen solution matches the mission. If narrative drifts too niche, he pulls it back toward the festival format. If visuals start looking like arthouse while the film is positioned as commercial, he adjusts direction.

He also interacts with producers and financiers: explains the creative strategy and translates the language of art into the language of goals. At this stage, the Vector resolves the core question: "Why are we making this film?" — and locks a clear, measurable answer.

During pre-production, the Vector Director defines the foundation of the future film. His first task is to fix the project's purpose. Together with producers he determines where the film is aimed: festival circuit, commercial theatrical, or co-production format. This becomes the film's manifesto, which everyone must return to whenever doubt or conflict arises.

The next step is building the directing team. But this is not just staffing positions, it's building balance. The Vector selects people so their approaches don't cancel each other, but form a system. Sometimes he deliberately puts stylistically "incompatible" directors on one team to create productive tension. Other times he seeks those who work in sync to avoid friction. His job is not only to decide who handles narrative or visual, but how those people will interact. Essentially, this is directing an ensemble of directors.

A major piece of the Vector's pre-production work is storyboards and visual concept. He doesn't frame shots himself, but he checks that proposed solutions do not conflict with the film's mission. If a commercial drama starts looking like an arthouse essay, he pushes it back toward the market. If a festival project loses sharpness, he pushes visuals toward more radical decisions.

Equally important is his involvement in the script. Together with the Narrative Director, he ensures the dramatic structure aligns with the purpose. If the story risks becoming too niche for the declared audience, he корректирует. If the script becomes too simplified at the expense of artistic value, he demands complexity.

Finally, the Vector Director is deeply involved in communication with producers and funds. He explains the artistic strategy so it is understood not only by creators, but by those who finance the project. In pitch meetings, applications, negotiations, he translates the language of art into the language of industry: why this film matters and what it is designed to achieve.

Thus, in pre-production the Vector Director becomes the architect of course. He doesn't manage details, but defines the trajectory. If he misreads it here, or leaves the purpose vague, the rest of production becomes a chaotic search.

Production

During production, the Vector Director becomes the main guardian of the course set in development and pre-production. The Vector's role in production is hard to overstate, because this is the most vulnerable phase — where the main danger appears: losing the mission in the flood of daily tasks.

His work is to ensure every key decision is checked against the film's manifesto. If the DoP insists on an impressive visual technique, the Vector checks whether it serves the purpose or pulls the film sideways. If an actor demands more takes for improvisation, the Vector decides whether it helps the story or simply stretches the process. If designers propose complex resets for detail, the Vector asks: will the viewer see this difference and does it serve the mission?

He does not act alone, but in constant tandem with the Coordinating Director. The Coordinator keeps the set in rhythm, resolves conflicts, and ensures departmental alignment. The Vector always looks above details: what direction any decision pushes the project. If the situation is critical and there is risk of losing the purpose, the Vector's word can become a "veto" on any decision.

On set he also serves as mediator between producers and the creative side. The producer thinks in resources: time, money, number of shooting days. The Vector explains why some things cannot be cut without losing meaning, and what can be reduced without harm. In this sense, he protects the artistic course from industry pressure — but not abstractly; strictly within the defined mission.

Thus, during production the Vector Director does not directly intervene in technique or acting, but constantly keeps the project inside its trajectory. His presence guarantees that despite the chaos of a shooting day, the film stays within its stated purpose and does not turn into a pile of random choices.

Post-Production

When the film enters post, the Vector Director becomes the main filter for dozens of scattered processes. The Vector's task does not change: keep the project inside its original purpose. He checks whether editing rhythm matches the dramatic emphasis,

whether color breaks the stylistic identity, whether music turns the film into another genre. When the sound team pushes for absolute cleanliness, he reminds them that living dialogue matters more than sterility. When the colorist offers a bold artistic grade, the Vector decides whether it supports festival positioning or breaks commercial readability.

In post-production, the Vector Director works not only with the team, but with the first viewer. He organizes screenings of rough versions — from early rough cut to near-final. These can be private showings for producers, test screenings for limited audiences, or focus groups collecting feedback. The Vector's job is not to please viewers and rewrite the film based on comments, but to test how clearly the film's purpose is being read. If the audience misses the key move, if pacing breaks perception, if the ending is too vague, the Vector decides what corrections are actually needed.

Another crucial area is external communication. In post begins the promotion preparation: festival submissions, labs, industry screenings. Here the Vector becomes the bridge between the film and institutions. He explains why this film is needed and helps producers build a release strategy.

Thus, in post-production the Vector Director does not merely observe departments, but ensures the final work remains true to the original mission and can be delivered to viewers and festivals in the form it was launched for.

Distribution and Promotion

After post, the Vector Director becomes the film's guide into the industry. The first responsibility zone is festivals and distribution. Together with producers he builds strategy: where to submit, which programs and sections fit this statement, where the film will be heard and where it risks dissolving. He participates in communication with selectors, prepares contextual materials, and sometimes personally presents the project to program directors.

Next: promotion. The Vector participates in trailer, posters, press kits, interviews, Q&As. His job is to ensure the film is not packaged in чужую оболочку: festival cinema should not be marketed like a genre action film, and a commercial product

should not be sold as an arthouse meditation. He curates the tone of communication so viewers and critics meet the exact film that was made.

A separate zone is localization and versions for different markets. Subtitles, dubbing, promo materials can distort intent. The Vector reviews and корректирует translations, explains to localizers where nuance cannot be lost, and ensures the film remains coherent across countries.

Finally, festival events and public screenings. The Vector is present at Q&As, answers press questions, becomes the film’s “voice” in the industry space. His framing is read as part of the statement itself, so he sets the tone through which critics and audiences will interpret the film.

Chapter 10. Coordinating Director

Any film is a complex organism. Hundreds of people, dozens of departments, thousands of decisions colliding, intersecting, and unfortunately often contradicting each other every day. The camera demands light, the light demands a set move, the set move demands extra budget, and the budget demands cutting rehearsal time.

In a system like this, you need someone who keeps it in balance. Not a dictator and not an administrator, but a kind of film therapist: the person who sees where the production machine has slipped and gently returns it to equilibrium. That role belongs to the Coordinating Director.

He is not the author of the vision and not the ideologue of the goal. That is the Vector Director's domain. The Coordinator is the one who takes that vision and makes sure it doesn't fall apart in the process. He works like a referee on a football field: he guarantees the game doesn't turn into a brawl. If a dispute is irresolvable, his word is final. But his decisions do not hang in the air. In critical situations he leans on the Vector Director, checking whether a given decision brings the film closer to its goal or pulls it off course.

A Coordinating Director is necessary because a film almost never moves in a straight line. Any process breaks into hundreds of small conflicts and mismatches. The DoP shoots a take that won't cut with the previous scene. The production designer delivers a set piece that clashes with the costumes. The actors deliver a line at a tempo that kills the editing rhythm. Each mismatch alone looks minor, but together they turn the project into a knot of contradictions. If you don't intervene, the film starts to come apart.

The Coordinator's job is to keep everything locked together. He is present at every phase and always functions as a point of assembly. In preparation, he checks that the script aligns with the visual approach and the budget's capabilities. During shooting, he makes sure the work tempo holds and no one drowns in endless takes or arguments. In post-production, he keeps editing, sound, color, and VFX inside the same frame so no department runs its own experiment at the expense of the whole.

In every conflict he does not choose the side of a “favorite” department. He chooses the side of the film. If the DoP insists on an expensive solution that is beautiful on its own but breaks the overall tone, the Coordinator cuts it. If the Performance Director wants to add an emotional gesture that contradicts narrative logic, the Coordinator steps in and locks the scene in a form the story structure can withstand.

Beyond arbitration, the Coordinator also handles technical tasks. He synchronizes the schedule so performance-heavy scenes match in emotional intensity and are not randomly fragmented. He ensures the editing map matches the shooting plan, and that the necessary “heads and tails” of takes are captured in time. He checks that the visual style does not diverge from the narrative. If the film is positioned as realistic, he won’t let the DoP drift into overly stylized techniques. His work is always aimed at eliminating internal contradictions before they become fatal.

The Coordinator doesn’t work loudly. In the credits his name isn’t highlighted. It sits among the other directors, and the average viewer is unlikely to understand or properly value his work. But he is the one who guarantees the film comes out cohesive, not as a stack of disconnected experiments.

Functions of the Coordinating Director

Conflict Arbitration.
When two departments cannot reach agreement, the Coordinator steps in. He hears both sides, weighs arguments, and makes the final call. He always cross-checks with the Vector Director: if the choice affects the film’s mission, priority goes to the decision that stays closest to the project’s course.

Department Synchronization.
He ensures the “orbital” directors are not working out of sync. Performance must match dramaturgy, visual style must not break story logic, and editing rhythm must align with what sound is building. The Coordinator constantly checks that all elements fold into one whole.

Maintaining Film Integrity.
His job is to prevent the film from splitting into a set of beautiful but autonomous

decisions. If a take is brilliant but doesn't work inside the overall structure, the Coordinator blocks its use. If the production designer creates a striking set that doesn't support the story, the Coordinator cuts it.

Maintaining Work Tempo.
He ensures the process doesn't stall in endless searching and endless takes. When an actor spirals into self-analysis, the DoP loops on technical tweaks, or the art department asks for hours of detail resets, the Coordinator brings the crew back into working rhythm.

Adjusting Schedule and Processes.
He checks that the shooting plan does not destroy performance continuity and energy. If emotionally heavy scenes are stacked back-to-back and risk breaking the actors, he changes the sequence. If the schedule blocks other departments, he rebuilds it to minimize downtime.

Filtering Decisions.

Creative work generates dozens of ideas. The Coordinator judges them by one criterion: does it strengthen the film or weaken it? If a decision doesn't help the overall result, it is marked as excess and does not move forward.

Presence Across All Stages.
In pre-production he checks the junction of script, visuals, budget, and schedule. On set he holds rhythm, controls alignment between departments, prevents elements from drifting apart. In post-production he synchronizes edit, sound, color, and VFX so the final film stays whole.

Emotional Therapy for the Team.
On set there is always room for conflict: ambition, fatigue, ego. The Coordinator plays therapist: he releases tension, finds a language different departments can use to agree, and reminds everyone that the film matters more than personal ambition.

It is crucial to examine the Coordinating Director's work not abstractly, but separately at each stage of production. A film lives in three different states: preparation, shooting, post-production, and each has its own failures and conflicts. What works

on paper can break on set; what is shot perfectly can fall apart in editing. If you don't break his functions down by stages, it's easy to underestimate the scale of the role: it can look like a "technical mediator," when in fact it is the connective tissue without which the film never reaches the audience.

Pre-Production

In preparation, the Coordinating Director is the glue that binds all future elements of the film into a working system. There are no shot takes yet, no live conflicts on set, but dozens of potential "tears" are already being laid down, and later they can become catastrophic.

First, the Coordinator checks that the script, the visual concept, and the budget are not living in parallel universes. He cross-maps them: does the text demand things impossible under the proposed conditions; does the DoP's artistic language sustain the story's dramaturgy; can the shooting schedule be aligned with the actors' arcs.

The Coordinator participates in storyboarding and visual style discussions. His job is not to pick lenses or color palettes, but to look wider: will the audience survive the proposed rhythm, will experimentation break editorial readability, will stylization overload the film to the point of losing its addressee. He compares proposals from the visual, narrative, and performance directors and checks compatibility.

A separate direction is schedule and calendar. Together with the producer and planning assistants, the Coordinator checks that heavy dramatic scenes are not placed back-to-back, and that actors have time to enter state before a climax. He cross-checks the shooting order against narrative logic so the hero does not end up living a "future" condition on set before a "past" one.

The Coordinator also participates in casting discussions. He doesn't replace the Performance Director, but together with the Vector Director he checks that selected actors match the film's overall tone and don't clash in energy. If the ensemble starts to drift apart, he signals the risk.

A crucial part of his work is communication. Already in pre-production he runs inter-department meetings, organizes "junction" sessions where visuals, sound,

narrative, and performance walk through key scenes on paper. His job is to surface incompatibilities before they become on-set problems.

In effect, during preparation the Coordinating Director acts like a system architect: he checks that the foundation can carry the load, the walls won't collapse into each other, and the engineering lines won't short-circuit. Everything else is taste and technique, but without this check the film can collapse before the first shot is filmed.

Production

On set, the Coordinating Director works as a stabilizer. All lines converge here: actors with their inner processes, the DoP with visual tasks, art with sets, sound with technical limits, schedule with time and budget. And these elements rarely align perfectly. The Performance Director wants one more take because "it can be better." The DoP needs an extra hour for lighting. The Narrative Director insists on rearranging details. The producer reminds everyone the day is ending.

In this situation, the Coordinator is not an administrator who just cuts time. He is an arbiter choosing in favor of the film. He rapidly determines: is that extra take needed for story integrity, is it worth giving the DoP time for adjustments, is the set change justified or is its effect not worth the delay. His goal is to prevent individual ambition or local decisions from breaking the film's overall movement.

On set the Coordinator also enforces alignment between departments. If an actor plays a scene with high emotional heat and the camera captures it "cold," the Coordinator intervenes: either he adjusts the actor, or pushes the DoP to rebuild the framing language. If the Sound Director proposes removing noise for cleanliness and it breaks realism, the Coordinator decides based on the film's vector.

A major part of the job is tempo. Films often stall not because there is no talent, but because searching drags on. The Coordinator watches that searching does not eat time and energy, and if necessary, he cuts it.

In critical cases, the Coordinator speaks the final word. But it’s not dictatorship: he cross-checks every decision with the Vector Director to understand whether it brings the film toward the goal or pulls it away. On set this pairing works especially sharply: the Vector sets direction, the Coordinator keeps the train on the rails.

Thus, in production the Coordinating Director is the figure who turns the chaos of a shooting day into a manageable process, preventing the project from collapsing under the weight of its contradictions.

Post-Production

When shooting ends, it can feel like the hardest part is over. In reality, post-production is where every divergence accumulated during production shows itself. The editing map can clash with performance logic. Color grading can “rewrite” the film’s tone. Sound can crush acting nuance. Composers and VFX artists often build their own universes that don’t match the film as a whole.

At this stage the Coordinating Director becomes the connective tissue between all post departments. His job is to ensure the final canvas doesn’t split into separate fragments. When the editor chases tempo and rhythm at the expense of meaning, the Coordinator pulls it back to dramaturgy. When the Sound Director proposes removing background for mix purity, he checks whether atmosphere will be lost. When a colorist wants to impose stylization, the Coordinator maps it against the visual concept and the film’s mission.

Together with the Vector Director, he also ensures the work stays on schedule. Post-production is often a chain of waiting: until the cut is ready, color and sound don’t start; until sound is finalized, music stalls. The Coordinator breaks this linearity and organizes work as a cascade: sound begins dialogue cleanup and a rough mix already on a rough cut; composers write to preliminary timings; colorists test primary grading on working material; VFX launches layout and previs on temp versions. This way processes run in parallel where possible, and the total time doesn’t dissolve into endless waiting.

In post-production, the Coordinating Director essentially becomes the film's "clamp": he tightens editing, sound, color, music, graphics into a single work. He is the one who turns the film into a coherent statement.

Chapter 11. Awards and Credits

When a film finishes its journey through post-production and distribution, the next level of validation begins: awards. Prizes and festivals become the litmus test of the new model, answering three uncomfortable questions: **who** among multiple directors gets recognized, **how** credit is distributed, and **what** the credits actually record.

In the classical system, everything is simple: “Best Film” goes to the director, sometimes paired with the producer. But in the new architecture this logic breaks. Here directing is distributed, and each director is responsible only for their orbit. So the recognition system must change too.

“Best Film” goes to the Vector Director.
This is not a gesture of formal hierarchy, but recognition of the core of his function. He holds the course from development to distribution. His job is to guarantee the film reaches the audience as a coherent statement. He does not place shots or work actors directly, but he keeps the project inside its manifesto.

Awards map to the orbits

Screenplay / Writing / Dramaturgy awards are the territory of the **Narrative Director**.

Ensemble performance awards (SAG Awards, Gotham, Critics’ Choice, the Robert Altman Award) belong to the **Performance Director**, because he works not with a single star but with the entire acting system as a whole.

Cinematography and art-direction awards are the result of the **Director of Photography (DoP)**.

Editing awards (BAFTA, Academy Awards) go to the **Editing Director**.

Sound awards belong to the **Sound Director**.

Special prizes for innovation, co-production, “team spirit,” and systemic achievement naturally fall into the sphere of the **Coordinating Director**.

Credits must reflect distributed directing

Instead of a single “Director” line, the credits feature a block titled **“Directing Team”**, listing the Vector Director, the Coordinating Director, and all orbital directors by function.

Public positioning: posters, one-sheets, billing

Here is the pain point of the new model: there are not one but seven directors. How do you show multiplicity without turning the poster into a phone book?

There are several workable approaches, depending on the team’s taste and the project’s strategy:

1) Lead name + “Directing Team” formula

Only the Vector Director is displayed on the poster, preserving industry habit. The press kit and on-screen credits then fully document the team. The poster stays clean, and the audience still gets a clear signal: this isn’t a one-person structure.

2) Duo instead of a solo

The poster highlights the Vector Director and the Coordinating Director as two poles of the system (course and coherence). The other orbits remain in the credits. This balances “keeping a face” with “hinting at distribution.”

3) Collective brand

The team operates under a single name, like a group: **“A film by directing group X”**, with the participants unpacked in the credits. Think music bands or art collectives.

4) Creative cast

If the strategy leans on prestige and “creative star power,” you surface the most publicly resonant creative forces instead of the Vector and Coordinator. In the center: the DoP, if it’s a world-authority cinematographer; next: the Narrative Director as a

guarantor of dramaturgical depth; plus the Performance Director if the film is built around ensemble acting. This configuration presents the film as a creative alliance, not an administrative model. The rest are formally fixed in credits and awards, while this “creative cast” becomes the public face.

Chapter 12. The Economics of the New Model

The main misconception: **more directors = more expensive.** In practice, it's the opposite.

In the classical system, one person tries to be an "octopus," splitting attention between actors, camera, editing, sound, producer communication, and industry politics. The result is predictable: overload, rushed decisions, accumulating mistakes. Every failure triggers overspending, and the budget inflates.

In the new system, one director is split into several. Each has their orbit and their section of responsibility: Vector for course, Coordinator for coherence, Narrative for dramaturgy, DoP for image, Performance for acting, Editing for structure, Sound for the acoustic layer. This immediately solves two things:

- workload is redistributed; nobody is "full-time" at burnout intensity,
- each person has room for parallel projects.

This is especially important for series and studios running a portfolio. Where one director used to drop out for a year, now someone can run one or two orbits across different projects. From direct experience and observation, this gives studios **+20–30% productivity** with the same headcount.

Fees: not growth, but redistribution

As mentioned above, in the new system the director no longer "belongs" to the film 100%. Participation is limited by task and timeframe, so fees decrease proportionally. The total sum is split among multiple people, but each is paid less than the all-powerful single director would be.

For the budget this is not expansion, it's a shift of shares: the same directing line item, divided across several names.

Where the real savings come from: less waste

What always devoured money in the classical model: reshoots, overtime, structural reworks after tests. Where the old system could burn up to **10% of the budget** on these “losses,” the new scheme can reduce it to **2–3%** by preventing errors earlier.

Quality as an economic factor

Many treat “quality” as abstract. For film economics it’s a number. Higher quality means:

- higher chance of entering prestigious festivals,
- higher probability of winning awards,
- easier international sales,
- longer life in the streaming long tail.

The new model increases quality by default because people work within their expertise: each film element becomes a separate piece of craftsmanship executed by specialized hands.

Star collaborations become structurally possible

Previously every director had one role: “the main one,” so they competed. Now they can combine.

Imagine a duo: a famous Narrative Director + a cult DoP. Or a trio: a performance director celebrated in theater + a star of the editing school + an Oscar-level visual artist. Like music collaborations, reach multiplies and industry attention grows without equivalent marketing spend.

Such a film becomes an event before the premiere: media writes about it, festivals anticipate it. That’s promo saved and market value added at the same time.

Risk reduction and insurance

Producers and funds always price in “key person risk.” One person gets sick or leaves, and everything collapses. In the new model there are multiple key figures, and the system isn’t dependent on one name. If someone exits, functions can be redistributed temporarily: Narrative can partially support actors, Coordinator and Vector can cover parts of visuals and sound, etc. Not their core zones, but they are still directors and can keep the project alive until a replacement is found.

This lowers the cost of insurance and completion bonds. Even **1% of budget** is serious money, and most importantly, the project becomes less risky for investors. That means financing becomes easier to secure.

Speed as survival

In modern production, speed is a survival factor: streamers and networks demand steady output. In the classical system, time is lost not only to processes but to arguments, approvals, and one overloaded person “holding decisions hostage” simply because they cannot be everywhere at once.

In the new model, each domain is run by an expert. Narrative makes narrative calls, visuals make image calls, sound closes sound decisions, editing closes structure decisions. Choices happen in parallel, quickly, without unnecessary bottlenecks.

For a studio this means one thing: production becomes predictable and rhythmic. Instead of constant failures and delays, you get a stable pipeline that outputs more films and series on the same resources.

In the end, the new model is economically stronger not because it’s “more democratic,” but because it turns chaos into a system. Instead of a tired octopus, you get an ensemble of specialists and that converts directly into money, time, and attention.

Chapter 13. The Legal Architecture of the New Model

Cinema has always rested not only on art and production, but on contractual structures. The old world was simple: in the “Director” column there was a single name, and all legal questions converged at that point. In the new system, that column stops working. Directing is distributed among several people, each responsible for their own orbit, and the industry is faced with the need to determine how to formalize this on paper.

Traditional practice is built around the concept of the “author-director.” His name appears in all agreements: with producers, funds, guilds, distributors. Rights, fee, and final authority are concentrated in him. But this practice has long diverged from reality. Films are already made by writers, showrunners, creative producers, and in most cases the contribution of a single director is inflated into a fiction. The new model simply formalizes this reality honestly.

At this point the first resistance appears. Funds and distributors are used to a film having one face to hold accountable. When there are seven such faces, the system appears chaotic. For it to be accepted, a legal language must be proposed that makes the new distribution understandable and manageable.

One path is the formal preservation of the old logic. The Vector Director may be listed as the “author” in the contract, while the others are credited as co-directors. Externally this remains a familiar structure, but in the appendices the full composition of the team and their roles are described in detail. For the industry this is the least traumatic transition: the formal framework remains the same, but the reality is accurately reflected.

The second option is recognition of the very category of a “directing team.” In that case, contracts do not fix a single name but a collective working similarly to an architectural bureau or a musical group. All members sign the agreement, all have status, and no contribution remains invisible.

The third path is structuring through a legal entity. A company or association is created that includes all the directors, and the contract is concluded with that entity. Internally, the company distributes roles and fees. This option is particularly

convenient for series and studio slate structures, where long-term management and stability of partnerships are essential.

The issue of money and rights is resolved no more complicatedly than in music. Each director receives a fee for their domain: narrative for script and structure, visual for imagery, performance for work with the ensemble. A percentage of authors' rights is divided between the Vector, who maintains the course, and the entire team that ensures the result. This structure reflects the real balance of power: the strategic center remains, but the contribution of others is legally recognized.

A special question concerns final authority. In the classical model it belongs either to the director or to the producer. In the new system it is more reasonable to закрепить it with the Vector + Coordinator pairing. One is responsible for purpose, the other for process coherence. If a deadlock arises, the producer becomes the third arbiter. This three-level system removes chaos and turns collective directing into a manageable mechanism.

Examples from other fields support such a model. In music, copyright is distributed among all participants in the creation of a composition. In architecture, projects are attributed to bureaus, even though dozens of architects work inside them. In advertising, the concept of a creative group replaces the notion of a single "genius." Cinema is simply catching up with these practices and acknowledging that film has long been created by many hands.

For producers, such legal structuring provides greater resilience. If one director leaves, the contract does not collapse: their functions are redistributed within the team, and the project does not stall. For funds, it offers transparency: it is clear who is responsible for which domain, and there is no risk that a "lone genius" will drag the project into an unpredictable direction. For the directors themselves, it guarantees recognition. Their work does not dissolve in the credits but receives legal protection and a share in authors' rights.

As a result, the legal framework of the new model does not destroy the old system; it expands it. In the "Director" column a new format appears — the directing team. Contracts are divided by domains, fees and rights are distributed, final authority is закреплено за связкой. The film receives not only creative but also legal stability: a

system that acknowledges the reality of distributed directing turns out to be more honest and more advantageous for all parties.

Chapter 14. The New Model and the Industry

Cinema does not exist in a vacuum. Even the most well-structured production system must integrate into industry practices: festivals, funds, distributors, critics. It is therefore important to understand how distributed directing will be perceived at the point of release.

Festivals are accustomed to seeing a single name. A brand-name around which the program is built. In the new system, the names multiply. At first this raises a question: who goes on stage? The answer is simple — everyone who participated. Not as a “noisy crowd,” but as an ensemble. The film is presented not by a “main director,” but by a team in which each is responsible for their own domain. It works like a football club: one takes the penalty, another guards the goal, a third controls the midfield. Without each of them there is no victory, and the audience understands this perfectly well.

For critics, this opens a new language of analysis. They can examine the contribution of the orbits just as in sports analysts discuss attacking and defensive lines. The film ceases to be the product of a “lone genius” and becomes the result of coordinated play. Who delivered the decisive pass, who saved the shot, who created the moment — criticism gains the ability to work with a living structure rather than a myth of a single author.

For film schools, the model is also beneficial. Instead of the myth that “a director must be able to do everything,” an honest system of specializations appears: someone studies narrative leadership, someone works with actors, someone focuses on visual language or sound. It is like training positions within a team: you cannot train a striker to stand in goal, but you can train him to interact with the goalkeeper.

Thus, the new model restructures not only production but also the industrial environment around it. Festivals see an ensemble, critics see positional play, the market sees a stable structure, schools see a real training system. All of this together turns film from a myth about a “hero-director” into true collaborative art, where every player matters.

The key effect of distributed directing is that it removes isolation. In the old system, the director often became a separate island, living inside their own vision and

arguing with producers, critics, distributors. In the new one, the team itself builds bridges. For a producer, there is no need to break through the “solid wall” of a single author, because there are multiple points of entry. If the market needs to be discussed, they go to the Vector. If there is a dispute about actors, they turn to the ensemble director. Communication becomes a clear, structured system.

There is also a strategic consequence: adaptation to new formats accelerates. The film industry has long operated not only in cinemas but also in streaming platforms, VR, and online environments. In the classical system, a director is not always ready for such transitions; their thinking may remain fixed in one format. In a distributed team, there is always a specialist pushing toward current technologies. This allows a film to remain contemporary and competitive without abrupt shifts.

Finally, the new model changes the career ladder itself. Previously, a director had to “grow into” the single place on the pedestal. This created artificial barriers: talented narrative specialists, sound designers, visual artists remained in the shadows for years. Now they have the opportunity to enter a project in their own position and receive recognition immediately, rather than waiting for the status of “the main one.” For the industry, this means a greater influx of new names and fewer lost talents who left before getting their chance.

Thus, distributed directing functions not only within the film but across the entire industrial ecosystem. It makes communication more flexible, applications more transparent, marketing broader, adaptation faster, and career trajectories more honest. And this is perhaps one of the strongest arguments: the new model does not break the system for the sake of experiment; it makes it more resilient where there were previously constant failures.

Chapter 15. The Future of Multi-Level Directing

With a high degree of confidence, one can assume that whoever takes the first step will collect the richest rewards. The first major film officially announced and realized under the system of multi-level directing will be an explosion. And it will not be about words or manifestos, but about the fact that the audience and the industry will see for the first time: each element of the film is led by a separate director, perhaps not a world-famous master, but an independent name. The dramaturgy is signed by one, the visual language by another, the actors by a third, and so on. This immediately turns the film into an event: the industry is accustomed to co-directing in pairs or to the title “director + screenwriter,” but a format in which each key domain is designated by its own director is a new language. It is not simply a film, it is a demonstration of an architecture that previously existed only in a rudimentary, compressed form.

For the press, this will be a delicacy. Reviews will inevitably begin to analyze the ensemble: “narrative by X, visual by Y, actors under the guidance of Z.” For festivals, it will become a повод for discussion: what matters more — the harmony of the ensemble or the star power of individual orbits? For the industry, it will be a signal that there is no “single weak link,” because each sector is supervised by a dedicated specialist.

It is precisely this first project that will become the turning point, because it will fix a new format in history.

Naturally, such a shift will inevitably provoke resistance. Part of the industry will feel offended, and that is entirely normal. The cult of the single “sacred director” has for decades been sustained by emotion, career mythology, and the economics of personal branding. Agents, producers, and managers accustomed to selling the fairy tale “he did everything himself” will attack this idea. Some will remain silent, some will criticize, some will actively block the implementation of the new system. But this is not an argument against the model; it is a test of its strength. Any redistribution of power provokes resistance.

To withstand that resistance, the first projects must be not just successful, but flawless. Legally transparent, managerially clean, with clearly defined functions and

working mechanisms for covering “risks.” Such a project will become a case study proving not only the artistic value of the model, but also its production reliability.

From that moment, the industry will begin to change. First, new formulas will appear in contracts and credits: not endless lists of names, but precise wording such as “directing team of the project.” Then marketing will be restructured: instead of interviews with a single director, there will be press panels in which different team members раскрывают different layers of the film. For media, this is only an advantage — there are more news hooks, and the film begins to operate across multiple audiences simultaneously.

The path of development for this concept promises to be uneven. There will be legal disputes over final cut, attempts to subordinate the “Vector” to corporate interests, attempts to appropriate authorship where it is collective. But it is precisely through such conflicts that the system will normalize. The more successful films that are released, the faster ready-made templates will appear, and the weaker the resistance will become.

Chapter 16. Other Formats of Application

The benefits of the new film-management model will first be felt by the television industry. A season consists of dozens of hours of screen time that no single person can realistically hold together without losses. In the classical system, a showrunner appoints “episode directors,” but this often turns into a lottery: style shifts from episode to episode, actors lose their internal dynamics, the visual language fails to align, and so on. Distributed directing removes this chaos. One narrative director holds the season arc, the performance director guides the ensemble across all episodes, the visual director maintains stylistic consistency, while sound and editing shape the breathing of each episode. The result is coherence at high speed, which means a stable product for streaming platforms that depend on regularity.

Series also benefit from parallel units. When multiple shooting teams work simultaneously, there is always a risk of stylistic fragmentation: one episode drifts into drama, another into action. In the new system, the orbits maintain the overall framework, and even different units are shooting “the same series.” The visual director establishes the rules of camera and lighting, the performance director keeps the ensemble on track, the narrative director ensures that secondary plotlines do not fracture the main arc. As a result, production accelerates while preserving the brand as a cohesive product that the viewer experiences as a unified story.

In addition, a series in the new system ceases to be a playground for the “arbitrariness of invited directors,” where each episode is colored by the taste of a particular filmmaker. In the distributed model, a unified authorial voice of the team is preserved. This benefits not only streaming platforms that sell stability, but also actors: they do not lose orientation from episode to episode and can grow organically within a defined framework.

In advertising, the distributed model functions as an accelerator. Commercials are produced under conditions where the client applies time pressure and the creative team adjusts revisions on the fly. In the old system, the director is forced to control all processes simultaneously — from working with actors to approving visual decisions and responding to client feedback. In the new model, each zone reacts independently: the visual department quickly adapts the look, sound adjusts the atmosphere, the performance director refines the acting toward the required

message. The coordinator synchronizes the process, and the commercial comes together without unnecessary strain.

There is another layer. In advertising, clients are accustomed to total control. They interfere in storyboards, font choices, and the actor’s tone. Pressure from the client is concentrated on a single director who is expected to answer simultaneously for narrative, visual solutions, performance, and technical details. In the distributed system, the load is differentiated: client demands are distributed among specialized directors — narrative, visual, and performance. This reduces cognitive and organizational overload, decreases redundant approvals, and accelerates the production cycle.

Documentary filmmaking benefits especially from the distributed model because traditionally one person is forced to combine incompatible roles: simultaneously working with material — information, people, animals, events, archives — while overseeing shooting and thinking about the future structure of the edit. These qualities rarely coexist in one individual, which is why many documentaries end up either emotionally powerful but structurally loose, or formally structured but emotionally cold. In the new system, tasks are divided: the narrative director works with collected material, texts, and documentation; the visual director leads the shoot and maintains the image style; sound shapes the acoustic space; and the coordinator keeps everything within schedule and budget. As a result, the project progresses faster, the author avoids overload, and the film retains both dramaturgical clarity and emotional intensity.

The advantage of the distributed model in documentary is particularly visible in post-production. The classical system drowns in hundreds of hours of footage: the director becomes overwhelmed and burned out, editing turns into a struggle against chaos. In the new system, the process is structured differently. The narrative director forms the skeleton, editing assembles the body, visual and sound construct the atmosphere, and the coordinator binds everything together. Even an unpredictable documentary becomes a cohesive experience in which contingency is woven into the larger fabric of the story.

Music videos become a field for rapid experimentation. Boldness, visual shock, and unexpected editing are valued here. In the distributed system, the video gains additional drive: the visual director pushes form, the editing director drives rhythm, the narrative director works with symbolism, and the performance director shapes the performer's physical presence. The result is that the music video becomes not merely a clip set to a track, but a standalone cultural event. For the artist, this is an opportunity to assert identity not only through music, but through a visual manifesto.

The particular value of the model for music videos lies in its ability to integrate different artistic environments: dance, video art, CGI, performance. In the classical system, one director attempts to embrace everything, and inevitably some area suffers. In the new system, each aspect has its curator. This means videos can be produced faster while being bolder and cleaner in form.

There are also cross-projects where formats blend: docu-series, advertising cases with narrative elements, concert films. In the classical model, the director is forced to jump between styles, which often ends in failure. In the distributed system, each orbit maintains its own optics, and the hybrid becomes stronger. The film no longer feels patchwork; instead, it gains cohesion and depth.

The model also functions in formats with short lifespans — branded videos, festival promos, even TikTok campaigns. Where a single director does not have time to think through everything, a team of specialists produces a fast and precise result. Quality increases, and diversity increases as well: experimentation becomes possible because risks are minimized.

Thus, the strength of the new model lies in its scalability. Beyond feature films, it works equally well in the long breath of series, the compressed impulse of advertising, the chaos of documentary, and the boldness of music videos. Each field tests the system differently, but the conclusion converges: less chaos, more structure, greater trust in the product. That is the main argument in its favor. The model is flexible, universal, and ready to be implemented in any field of audiovisual production.

Chapter 17. Ethics and Power

In the classical model, too much responsibility was concentrated in a single person. The director was accountable not only for the areas in which they were strong, but for everything else as well: dramaturgy, visuals, sound, actors, editing. In practice, this meant they were responsible even for domains in which they might not be experts at all. On one hand, this made it easy to identify someone to blame in case of failure. On the other, it created an illusion of omnipotence that led to abuse and overload. In the new system, responsibility is distributed: each orbit is accountable for its own zone, while the Vector and the Coordinator ensure alignment of decisions. This does not remove personal responsibility, but makes it specific: a failure in dramaturgy falls on the narrative director, performance issues on the performance director, and the overall result on the Vector and the Coordinator.

The distributed model protects the project from the abuse that inevitably arises in a vertical power structure. Where a single director could become a dictator, the new system splits authority into several centers. If the performance director begins to misuse their position, the coordinator can intervene; if someone attempts to steer a commercial blockbuster into heavy philosophy, the Vector steps in. Such a structure creates a balance of power in which no one can unilaterally dominate the entire team.

The ethical weight of the new system is also evident in the way it reduces the dependence of hundreds of careers on one person. In the old model, a director could sink a project through personal instability: emotional breakdowns, financial irresponsibility, even everyday alcoholism. In the distributed system, risks are mitigated — the project can continue moving even if one member leaves or fails.

It is also important that the new model creates new mechanisms of recognition. In the old system, “authorship” was often assigned to a single name, even when dozens contributed more. Now each contribution is openly acknowledged: the orbits receive public recognition, and their work becomes visible. This reduces feelings of exploitation and makes participation more transparent. Each person understands that their effort will not disappear into the shadow of a single “genius.”

Ethically, the new model is significant because it protects the team from the tyranny of one individual. In the classical system, a director could justify any behavior through the status of “main author”: pressure on actors, disregard for specialists, excessive overtime. When authority is divided among several directors and overseen by a coordinator, balance emerges. Conflict is not eliminated, but unchecked permissiveness is.

Finally, the distributed model increases trust from producers and funds. In the classical system, they risked the entire budget on a single name, and any doubt about that individual’s stability could collapse a deal. In the new system, responsibility appears institutional. There is a structure in which rights and duties are defined and distributed. For investors, this means the film depends not on the psychology of one person, but on a systemic architecture.

It is worth noting separately that this model not only expands but also democratizes the ethical dimension. In the old system, failure in one area often led to the stigmatization of the entire film and the career of a single individual. Even if the screenplay or editing undermined the result, criticism and the market targeted the director’s name. In the new system, criticism can be specific: the audience and the industry understand who was responsible for dramaturgy, visuals, sound, and performance. This makes the system fairer and reduces personal trauma.

Ultimately, the distributed model establishes a different type of power — the power of procedure rather than personality. At the center are rules and structure that regulate the process, not the emotional charisma of a single leader. This brings cinema closer to contemporary standards of management in other industries — IT, science, architecture — where collective work has long become the norm.

Chapter 18. Potential Problems and Risks

Any work would be dishonest toward the reader if it described only the strengths of the new model. The system of distributed directing, like any reform, is not without complications. In fact, it is precisely the discussion of problems that reveals where the hidden pitfalls lie and allows solutions to be prepared in advance. In this chapter, we will examine the key risks that arise when implementing the model and show which tools can neutralize them.

Scheduling and Directors' Availability

Bringing seven directors together on one project initially seems almost impossible. Each has their own plans, other projects, obligations to producers or studios. Recognized names often have schedules mapped out months or even years in advance. The idea of assembling them all for one film truly looks like a logistical nightmare.

However, cinema has long learned to operate under far harsher constraints. If we look at star-studded acting ensembles, we see performers with far more intense schedules regularly appearing together in the same project. Coordinating Robert Downey Jr., Scarlett Johansson, and Chris Evans at the same time seems impossible, yet Marvel managed it for decades. Actors juggle shoots, advertising contracts, tours, interviews — and studios still bring them together when needed. Directors, who do not need to be physically present on set every day, are in some ways easier to coordinate.

Still, calendar pressure remains a real issue. Unlike actors, directors are involved not in isolated scenes but in a long-term process: pre-production, production, post-production. They cannot simply "fly in for a week" and complete their portion. Systemic participation is required, and that can create serious overlaps.

The solution lies in a hybrid participation model. Orbits do not need to be on set 24/7. A significant portion of their work can be done remotely. The narrative director can supervise script revisions online, the visual director can review storyboards and mood boards through digital pipelines, music and sound can work on rough material

remotely. Modern collaboration systems such as Frame.io, Miro, and cloud-based editing platforms allow synchronization without constant physical presence.

Another part of the workload can be scheduled in “windows” between projects. No director must be attached to a film for an entire year. Their involvement is segmented: the performance director is most active during casting and rehearsals, the visual director during storyboarding and key shooting blocks, sound during post-production. The workload is distributed not only functionally but temporally.

This system resembles the logic of television series. In series production, dozens of directors join at different times, sometimes in parallel, sometimes replacing each other. The showrunner maintains coherence. In multi-level directing, that role is fulfilled by the Vector and the Coordinator. They guarantee continuity: even if individual directors enter and exit the project at different stages, the course and structure remain intact.

Conflicts of Authorship and Ego

Seven directors in one project mean seven ambitions. Nearly all are accustomed to being the sole name on the poster, the person to whom decisions and industry attention converge. In the new system, power and recognition are distributed among several figures. This is where the first conflict arises — many are not ready to give up the status of “sole owner.”

In the old system, such a clash meant collapse. Having multiple equal authors on set inevitably led to war. Attempts to divide authority ended in splits or replacements. In the distributed model, conflict is partially neutralized by structure. Competence zones are defined in advance. The narrative director handles the script, the visual director handles style and framing, the performance director handles actors, sound handles the acoustic layer.

The solution lies in procedure. During pre-production, a document is created detailing roles and boundaries. This serves as a “constitution of the project.” The Coordinator ensures compliance and, in conflict, returns everyone to the collectively agreed rules. Emotions — jealousy, the urge to interfere, the need for validation —

do not disappear, but they become manageable. Decisions return to procedure rather than personal ambition.

Human factors will not vanish overnight. Early years of the model will involve tension because directors are accustomed to being monarchs. It will be difficult to see themselves as an orbit rather than the center. This is normal. Political history shows similar transitions from monarchy to democracy: resistance was strong at first, but norms eventually changed.

Evolution will do its work. Once successful distributed projects appear, directors will recognize practical advantages: less overload, fewer risks from others' mistakes, more time for parallel work. The painful feeling of "I'm not the main one" will fade as reality demonstrates that being part of a team is more sustainable than being a solitary dictator.

Conflicts of authorship and ego are therefore temporary barriers. Structure and practice will create new norms. In time, the industry will accept that film authorship is an ensemble of roles rather than a single signature.

Industry Pressure

The film industry has long operated on a simple formula: "director = author." Festivals, investors, journalists want one name to hold onto. Any shared authorship model feels strange and threatening. At pitch sessions, the first question will be predictable: "Who is in charge?" If the answer seems vague, proposals may be rejected. This reaction to novelty is natural.

The solution is not confrontation but framing. Externally, the model can present a familiar "beacon": "A film by a directing team led by…" This gives the industry a recognizable anchor, while internally authority remains distributed. It is a pragmatic compromise: audiences and curators get orientation, but power remains shared.

For viewers and media, the idea of a directing ensemble may even feel attractive — a new format, an unusual collaboration. For producers and funds, however, it initially appears risky. Until the model becomes established, it is wise to position the Vector

as the visible lead. The formula “directing team led by…” provides balance: familiar structure outside, distributed practice inside.

Clarity in explanation is essential. Press releases and catalogs should avoid vague language about “collectives” and instead state specifics: “Dramaturgy led by one director, visuals by another, actors by a third.” Structure replaces perceived chaos.

Festivals and markets will require prepared answers. When asked “Why not one director?” the response is simple: “Because no single person can equally master dramaturgy, visuals, sound, and editing. We distribute responsibility and reduce risk.” When asked “Who makes the final decision?” the answer is procedural: “Each zone has autonomy. In disputes, the Coordinator decides. The Vector ensures alignment with the project’s goal.” Clear, practical answers reduce confusion.

The press prefers narratives to diagrams. Media materials must offer a simple story: “The first film directed by a team of seven directors,” “Each responsible for a domain, together creating a cohesive whole,” “A star directing ensemble as a new format.” Journalists need a concise formula. Without one, they will invent their own.

Industry resistance is temporary. Early projects will face skepticism. But once a successful film demonstrates the model in practice, attitudes will shift. The industry believes in examples, not manifestos. One strong case closes a hundred arguments. And eventually, the question “Why no single director?” will turn into “When can we try this too?”

Conclusion. The director is dead. Long live the director.

The first project created under the new model will be a trial by fire. The industry does not love ideas — it loves cases. Hundreds of manifestos and theories lie dormant in archives because they were never embodied in practice. One successful project, where the model is realized in reality, will outweigh every article and lecture. After that, debates about “possibility” or “impossibility” become meaningless — there will be a tangible example to reference. That is precisely why attention to the first film will be exaggerated.

This book is not only a manual for a new methodology but an invitation to act. One of its readers will be the person who decides to assemble the team, take the risk, and show the industry how the new format works. Do not wait for someone else to test it for you. In cinema, the one who wins is the one who first places proof on the table.

If you have access to a producer, a studio, even a mid-level budget, you have a chance. It does not require extraordinary resources — only the courage to step beyond the familiar framework. And if such a project happens, it will not only be your film; it will become a precedent that changes the rules for everyone.

So the conclusion of this book is simple and direct: the new format already exists not only on paper but in the form of small yet successful experiments by close colleagues and directors. The first tests of the system have already been carried out — in micro-budget features and short films. And they have proven that distributed directing does not break the process; on the contrary, it unifies it. At a small scale, the model has demonstrated viability. Now the next step is to scale up.

The significance of the new model extends far beyond a single profession or a single film. It is not merely another “school of thought” about directing but a fundamental restructuring of how cinema is created. The model reduces excessive risks, redistributes responsibility, makes production predictable and resilient. It improves product quality and release speed, reduces pressure on a single individual, and gives producers a tool for control where previously everything depended on the mood and health of one “genius.”

This system is capable of changing the rules of the game themselves: from film education structures to contracts, from festival awards to marketing. It opens the door to new names, creates space for career paths that previously did not exist. It allows the industry to operate more steadily, produce more, and risk less.

Most importantly, this transition is inevitable. Cinema is too overloaded, too dependent on streaming output, and too exhausted by failures to ignore a solution that simultaneously reduces risk and increases results. The question is not whether it will happen — the question is when and where it will happen first.

And when the first feature-length project enters the world under this system, arguing will become pointless. From there, momentum will build: discussions will turn into practice, practice into norm, and the idea itself into an industry standard. Distributed directing will cease to be an alternative and will become the obvious future — one people will accept as quickly as they once accepted sound cinema or digital editing.